



## Children to save Peking Opera

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## Fine sites to fly a kite

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# Today as seen tomorrow



More than any other artist, Yue Minjun and his laughing face captured the spirit of the Cynical Realist movement of the 1990s. When his piece "Execution" sold on auction for 30 million yuan, he became one of the most sought after Chinese artists.

In his latest collection - years in the making - Yue examines the world of the today as it is excavated by the man of tomorrow.

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# Gov eases restrictions on outgoing investment

By Han Manman

The Ministry of Commerce relaxed rules to make it much easier for companies to win approval to invest overseas in a new move to encourage domestic industry to go abroad.

The approval process will be simplified and handled by local rather than the central government, ministry spokesman Yao Jian said at a briefing in Beijing early this week. The procedures take effect May 1.

The ministry will only review applications for overseas investment valued at US \$100 million (680 million yuan) or

more, or investment in particular countries, especially those with which China has no diplomatic relations. Investments involving more than one country or region or special investment are subject to ministry approval.

For a project which does not require ministry approval, an application form is required and a certificate will be granted within three days.

"This will be the case for most investment projects," Yao said. "Experience has proven that overseas investment and cooperation can help stabilize foreign demand

and increase domestic demand."

"Going abroad' will be one of our next priorities, and it is an important step to revive the economy," he said.

The official *Shanghai Securities News* said Tuesday the changes meant 85 percent of foreign investment projects would be approved by local commerce authorities when the rules take effect.

The government announced 150 billion yuan of planned overseas spending last month, including a 133-billion investment in Rio Tinto Group, the world's third-largest mining company.

The country's outbound foreign direct investment (FDI) may top its inflow this year for the first time, Standard Chartered Plc said.

On March 5, the government also moved much of its FDI approval to local authorities to encourage foreign investors to come to China.

Merger deals involving foreign investment of less than US \$100 million in most sectors can skirt ministry approval. Sectors where foreign investment is "forbidden" or "restricted" are excluded from the changes.

## Olympic merchandise to be withdrawn next month



Beijing Olympic and Paralympic licensed products will no longer be available starting April according to BOCOG's sales rules. As the deadline draws near, all products are selling at discounts of 50 to 70 percent. Many shoppers are flocking to stores for their last chance at Olympic merchandise.

(By Venus Lee)

## Vacation plan may help economy, but not today

By Huang Daohen

Is vacation the way to offset the impact of a global recession? Tourism authorities said yes, but held back plans to launch a national vacation program.

Gao Shunli, a senior official at China National Tourism Administration, told a recent press conference that the country's national leisure plan, now being rewritten to stimulate the domestic travel market, will be postponed.

Though a national leisure plan is one of many measures expected to address the financial crisis, it must offer a long-term plan to improve the quality of life, Gao said. The plan requires more research, and there is no

specific timetable for when it will take effect, he said.

The plan, Gao said, will include incentive travel, welfare travel and study tours. People who do not have much time or who earn little will benefit most. Under the new regulations, companies would be encouraged to reward outstanding employees with travel packages, which the company could claim as its operational costs.

Themed travel for students and retirees are also mentioned in the plan, Gao said. The administration has carried out trials in major cities like Guangzhou, Suzhou and Hangzhou.

The public and experts lauded the plan, though they are

divided on the current policy: vouchers.

On March 1, Shanghai residents lined up from early in the morning at various distribution points for the latest coupons worth a total 9 million yuan in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province.

"The coupons are an innovative way to boost tourism consumption," Chen Guang, a sociology professor at Beijing Normal University, said. "But the stimulation will only work in the short term."

Chen said the best way would be to restore the May Golden Week to boost domestic travel until the national leisure plan is ready.

## Family planning commission to reward informants

By Venus Lee

The Beijing Municipal Commission for Family Planning (MCFP) said at its annual meeting yesterday that the government is preparing to implement a third party reporting system to prevent violating the law.

The commission said Beijing had 16.95 million residents at the end of last year, and the natural growth rate was .34 percent.

"The city's birth rate has been low the past few years, but we still have a lot of work to do in preventing the abuse of funds and to stop people from breaking the law for personal gain, engaging in fraud and preventing birth out of wedlock and illegitimate births," Commissioner Deng Xingzhou said.

"Under the regulations for the reporting system, which will take effect soon, informants will be rewarded," he said, though the details of what the reward will be are not finalized.

The director said the government has provided free premarital medical checks since last year, and it will cooperate with the Municipal Department of Health to promote pre-natal healthcare. It also provides pregnant women with free folic acid supplements, which can help prevent miscarriage, lean, premature birth and a cleft palate.

It will improve sex education in schools and colleges, and will add 500 new free condom dispensers in the city in addition to its 1,021 old boxes.

# Olympic pandas head home to Sichuan

By Jin Zhu

The Beijing Zoo is drawing crowds this week to wave farewell to its eight Olympic pandas who will return to Sichuan on March 22 after nine months of life at the zoo.

Zoo officials said another three to six pandas from the Wolong Nature Reserve in Sichuan Province will come to Beijing in two months to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the country's founding.

"The eight Olympic pandas are accustomed to the life in Beijing and have grown well," Zhang Changjiang, one of the three keepers from Sichuan, said.

The eight pandas arrived ahead of schedule last May after the Wolong Nature Reserve was severely damaged in the Wenchuan earthquake.

"The zoo provided perfect living conditions for the pandas, including building a refrigeration and water house to keep their food fresh and clean. Their daily dietary intake already exceeds 50 kilograms of bamboo and 2 kilograms of apples," Zhang said.

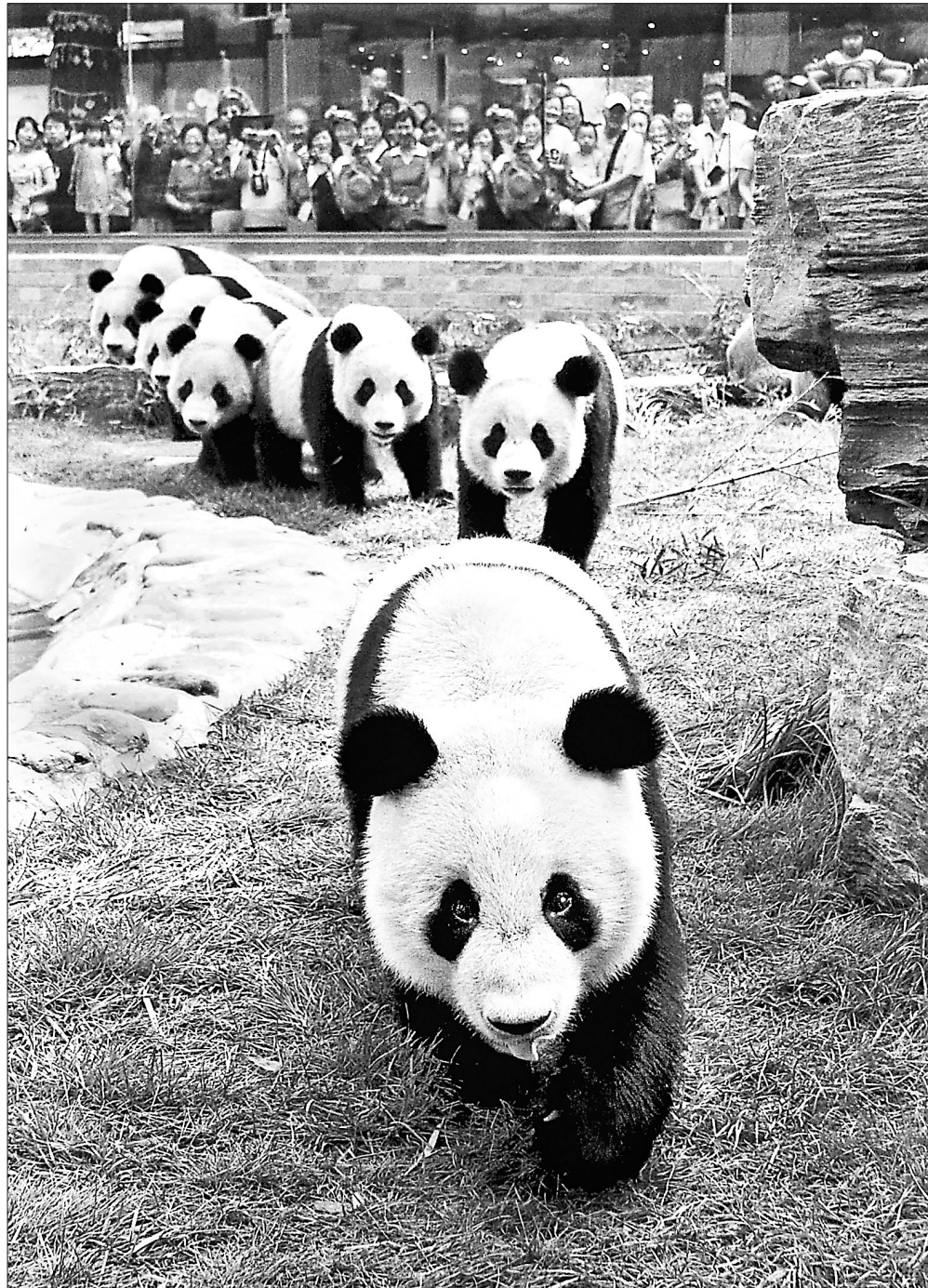
"All eight pandas are healthy. Three of them, Huanhuan, Fuwa and Meixin, have gained more than 20 kilograms," he said.

The zoo admitted 2.1 million tourists to see the pandas over the last nine months.

Zhang said the return flight for the eight pandas is set for 11 am on Sunday, and their final destination will be the Bifeng Gorge Base of the Panda Protection Research Center in Ya'an, Sichuan Province.

"Since it will take one to two years to renovate the Wolong Nature Reserve, the eight Olympic pandas will be settled in Ya'an," Tang Chunxiang, assistant director of the Bifeng Gorge Base, said.

The base is caring for 50 pandas from Wolong in 10 new panda houses. Another 10 houses are ready except for some greenery work.



The pandas bound for Sichuan Province are all in good health, their keepers say. Photo by Tom Wang

## Student says school expelled her for blogging

By Wang Yu

Wang Tingting, a senior majoring in German at Beijing Foreign Studies University, found online fame with her latest blog entry, which tells how the school expelled her for posting messages critical of the school and the country's foreign language education system.

She posted four articles at her QQ.com blog since March 8 in which she doubted everything she learned in college and cut down the study environment.

"I'm not fighting against the idea of studying a foreign language, but don't we have the right to our choice?" Wang wrote. "Every step through our education systems requires another exam, and that exam always tests English. The language has a huge influence on a Chinese student's opportunity for further education, and even on his or her future."

The English problem was not



Wang Tingting

a new topic. English education — especially the CET (College English Test) — for college students has long been a target of public criticism. In her post, Wang noted that Zhao Benshan, the Dongbei comedian, would make a better Minister of Education since at least he would "encourage

national culture."

But what earned Wang the most attention was a later article, written as a letter to her mother, explaining that she was expelled from college for what she wrote on her blog.

The university posted a response on its Web site. It said Wang applied for a break in schooling last May with the intent to continue her classes this February, when the new semester began. However, she never registered for the new semester and asked to leave the school.

The student management department of the university also said they never made the decision to discontinue Wang's schooling.

"As an adult and a citizen, Wang has freedom of speech. We won't comment on how she chooses to exercise it," Xumei, spokeswoman for the Ministry of Education, said at a conference

Wednesday. "This issue is part of the school's internal affairs, and we believe they will make the right decision."

While it seems Wang did leave school on her own, few of her readers care. A teacher in the school's student management department said, "She more or less invented the hype." Her former classmates agreed. Another student said Wang was hardly ever on campus after the second semester of her third year.

Another blogger on QQ.com, who claims he is also a student in the German department, said that according to the school's internal information Wang admitted the stunt was planned by an entertainment agent with whom she had signed.

"I won't accept any interviews and have stopped discussing the issue. But my view of the education system has not changed," Wang wrote in her latest post.

## Freelancer's story earns place in journalism hall of shame

By Venus Lee

When the *West China City Newspaper* broke a story about Chinese destroyers forcing their pursuing Indian assault submarine to surface while battling the pirates of Somalia in January, there was only one factual error: everything.

As of last week, Tong Qizhi, the freelancer who submitted the story to *West China* and the Qingdao Morning Post, from which it spread to major portals like Sina.com and QQ.com, is permanently banned from reporting the news.

He told the Press and Publication Administration (PPA) that as a former veteran, he recognized that the current political climate presented a good opportunity to profit from covering the Chinese navy.

Tong told editors at *West China* that he had a contact in China's anti-piracy patrols that could provide him inside patrol information. *West China* and Tong had a prior relationship, so the editors gave him a column to chronicle patrol happenings.

By scanning through updates from other Web sites and adapting and embellishing them to sound like on-the-scene reporting, Tong began to spin his stories. *West China* ran 26 of his features from December to January, including two fabricated stories where Chinese warships took on Indian submarines.

The PPA also criticized the two newspapers and punished editing staff responsible for running the story.

Competition has given rise to a large freelance industry, though many of these reporters are unqualified and untrained. "They know what the media and editors are looking for — the exaggerated, the weird, the eye-catching — but these stories are easier to make up. Their only motivation is money, and they have no journalistic integrity or moral imperative that compels them to submit an authentic story," Gao Xiaohong, president of the College of Journalism at the Communication University of China, said.

Gao also blamed the media. "Some media outlets put economic interests ahead of their readers, and that is wrong. They are eager to cover more, but they don't take the time to check for quality," Gao said.

# Educators say Peking Opera can still be saved

By Han Manman

It has been a year since the Beijing schools added Peking Opera to their course list as part of a coordinated effort to preserve the traditional art for another generation.

But parents' lack of understanding and a shortage of professional teachers continue to hamper the program's growth as the country embraces more international art forms.

The national government announced early this week it will produce its own Peking Opera teaching materials. It seems to be determined to preserve the art form – even if many have already neglected it.



Lack of qualified Peking Opera teachers is a big problem.

## Peking Opera after a year

Li Yalan, the Peking Opera teacher at Beijing No. 2 Experimental Primary School, claps her hand in rhythm as she directs her students at rehearsal.

"Don't mumble. You have to use your voice and your nose. Watch your arms! Grace! No, do it again!" she shouts.

This was one of the first 22 primary and secondary schools to adopt the government's Peking Opera pilot program last year.

Fifty girls enrolled in her "Qing Yi" class, in which she teaches how to play the operatic role of a dignified young or middle-aged woman.

The classroom next door is full of boys studying Lao Sheng, the bearded old or middle-aged man.

"My students have improved a lot since last year. Some of them were trying to sing Peking Opera like pop music at the start, but now, many have gotten a feel for it," Li says.

The school asked the 70-year-old former star of the Beijing Opera House to teach the class last year.

"The students are kids; it's hard for them to concentrate on studying a complicated art for 45 minutes," Li says. She and other teachers try to mix up their lessons with background to make class more interesting.

"My grandpa likes Peking Opera a lot, but I didn't care for it at first," Li Hanwei, a 9-year-old student, says.

"Sometimes, the songs and the notes have too many weird twists. It makes it really hard to learn," Li says. But he is proud when he can sing it in front of his friends.

## Hope for the future

Chen Bihai, who heads up the school's opera program, says the pilot is "essential" to preserve and revitalize traditional culture.

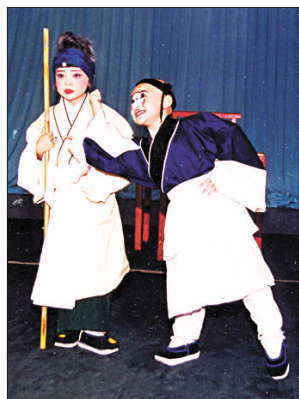
"Peking Opera is an elective course right now, but I think one day it will be compulsory," he says.

The current program, started by the Ministry of Education last year, put Peking Opera classes at 200 schools in 10 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions.



Peking Opera is lost in China's younger generation, where people are more interested in pop stars and Western culture.

CFP Photos



Student performers  
Photo provided by Chen Bihai

The course, which includes 15 classical and modern pieces, may help students better appreciate their culture and cultivate patriotism: Many plays deal with famous historical events.

Chen says Peking Opera emphasizes the gentle beauty of the woman and the machismo of the man – something he deems as important in a generation where "girls act like boys and boys act like girls."

"Western culture has profoundly affected Chinese children. Few of them care about

Peking Opera. The art form will die after this generation," Chen says, hoping the classes may inspire a few students to enjoy the entertainment of their ancestors.

But more often than not, a student's choice of electives is not his own. Most students' parents are very involved in class selection, Li says.

"Parents ask their kids to take electives like piano or modern dance, both of which come from the West," she says. Most of her students are in the class only because their parents or grandparents are fans.

"Some other parents send their kids to Peking Opera class because it can earn five extra points on their middle school entrance exam," Li said.

Chen says getting the parents on board is the first step to building a real program, and that means answering their fears.

But after the first group of students took the stage with their make-up and colorful costumes, it was hard to stop their peers from wanting to join.

## What makes a teacher?

Pilot schools also lack qualified teachers.

Among 48 music teachers at the 22 pilot schools, fewer than 10 teachers – including those who taught themselves – ever studied Peking Opera, says Shen Yimin, director of Beijing Basic Education Research Center from Beijing Institute of Science and Technology Education.

"Most of the music teachers know nothing about the ancient art form, and they really can't inspire the students to be interested in its slow pace or abstruse lyrics," Shen says.

Classes at Chen's school are taught by five professional opera teachers brought in from the outside. But her school is far from the norm, and Shen says more colleges need to add Peking Opera to their curriculum if they plan to continue the new program.

The government is also considering adding an education major at Peking Opera schools to cultivate more

teachers for the primary and middle school programs.

Music teachers in Beijing schools are required to study Peking Opera before introducing it to their students.

Shen cannot say when the pilot program will extend to all the capital's primary and middle schools.

## Tapping new talent

Peking Opera has been around at least 200 years, and was the country's original synthesis of music, dance, art and acrobatics.

But its history is lost in a younger generation more interested in pop stars, Li says. She worries because fewer and fewer boys are studying opera – even at opera schools.

"Unlike girls, boys go through a dramatic voice change as they age. Many of them cannot continue opera after puberty because their voice is not longer suitable," Li says.

An early education program may inspire and identify talented boys who may want to go on to Peking Opera school, she says.

# Tests show athletes in the south faking their age

(AFP) – A government investigation in southern China has shown that thousands of athletes there are likely to have faked their ages in an effort to gain an advantage over their rivals.

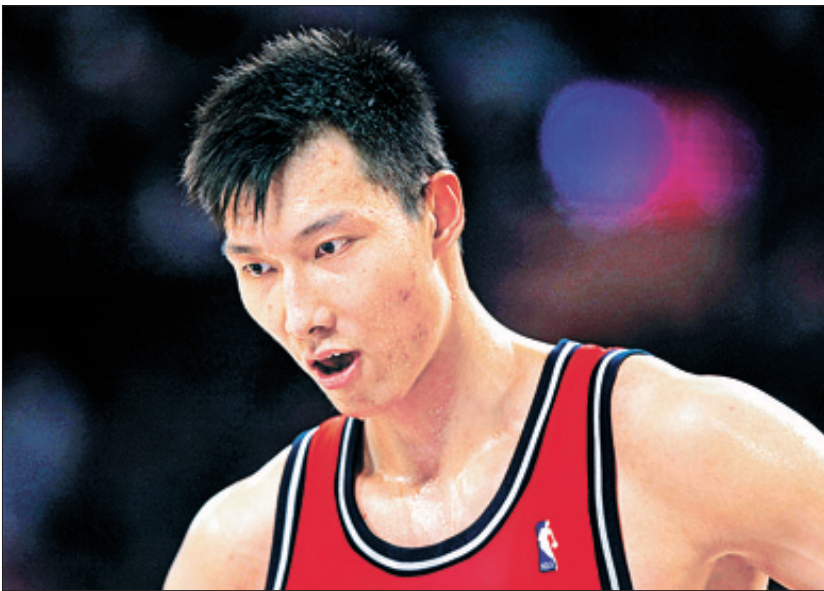
Bone tests of nearly 13,000 athletes found that over 2,000 were likely older than their registered age, according to the Sports Bureau of Guangdong Province, which carried out the probe.

The tests were carried out on athletes registered at provincial sports academies with most youths in their teens.

“We must ensure that those athletes faking their ages cannot find any way to take advantage (in competition),” local press quoted bureau officials as saying.

Some of the athletes were up to seven years older than their registered ages, but most only differed by a year or two, according to the report, which listed the names and disciplines of all those tested.

The investigation into the 13,000 athletes came as Guangdong prepared for the 2010 Asian Games. The province will this year also host the four-yearly China National Sports Games.



NBA player Yi Jianlian, who is from Guangdong Province, was caught faking his age last year. Press reports said his real age was 24, while he is officially listed as being 21 years old.

CFP Photo

## Official response

It is not accurate to say that as many as 2,000 athletes have faked their ages since the case is still under investigation, Chen Wenqian, director of the Training Center at Guangdong Provincial Sports Bureau, told the local *Nanfang Daily*.

“But the move shows our stance of cracking down on athletes who fake their age,” Chen said.

Chinese athletes have faced repeated claims of age-faking in recent years. Chen attributed this to intense competition as the performance of athletes in annual provincial-level sports meet is critical to their career.

Every year, thousands of athletes join these competitions, but only those who make it to the top eight can go on to higher level events. Local officials also feel a huge

pressure to win, since doing so means more funding for them.

It is no surprise therefore that some athletes and their families have participated in the deception.

Chen said the government will take more measures to address the issue, adding that it is committed to creating an environment for fair play. (By Huang Daohen)

## China lays on group wedding for quake survivors

(Reuters) – The government is to pay for a group wedding of 40 survivors who lost spouses in last year’s Sichuan earthquake to help them make new families, and officials will be given priority, a newspaper said Wednesday.

“Twenty families will finally be chosen, 10 of which must have one official at least, and the other 10 couples will be ordinary people,” the Sichuan-based *Tianfu Morning Post* said, citing a government announcement.

The group wedding will be held next month and each couple can invite eight friends to the ceremony, the newspaper said. After the ceremony, the couples will be given a free trip to the southern tropical island of Hainan.

## Pig sellers arrested for banned growth chemicals

(Reuters) – Fifteen people in Guangzhou were arrested for selling pigs that had been fed banned chemicals to make their meat leaner, Xinhua news agency reported.

The pigs had been fed ractopamine and clenbuterol. The investigation was initiated after 70 cases of clenbuterol poisoning were reported in Guangzhou in the past month, officials from the People’s Procuratorate of Guangzhou City said.

Ractopamine and clenbuterol help pigs produce leaner pork, but are banned in the country because of health risks to humans.

Ractopamine is commonly used by pig breeders in the US, so meat sold into China has to come from farms and breeders where the chemical is not used. Chinese customs has on occasion halted shipments of pork imports because of tainted ractopamine.

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# Coca-Cola's bid for Huiyuan rejected

By Huang Daohen

The government soundly rejected US-based Coca-Cola's US \$2.4-billion (16 billion yuan) bid for Huiyuan Juice. Had it been approved, Coca-Cola's acquisition would be the largest ever by a foreign company.

The ruling, announced Wednesday afternoon by the Ministry of Commerce (MOC), said the deal would unfairly restrict competition. It marked the first test of new anti-monopoly laws passed last August. Market watchers say it was indicative of the government's stance on takeovers of famous local brands by foreign companies.

In a statement, the ministry said it rejected the deal because it would give Coca-Cola the chance to dominate the market and drive up prices for consumers and reduce their options.

Huiyuan, the country's largest juice maker, occupies 45 percent of the domestic fruit-juice market and a 42 percent of its nectar-beverage market, Xinhua reported. Coca-Cola controls a 52.3 percent of the soft drink market and a 12 percent of the fruit-and-vegetable beverage market.

The ministry said it asked Coca-Cola to relinquish the Huiyuan brand as a condition for approval, but the soft drink giant failed to address the concerns.

Coca-Cola's spokesman said Wednesday the company was disappointed, though it would remain committed to the China market and shift its focus to building up its existing local brands.

"We are disappointed, but we also respect the ministry's decision," Coca-Cola CEO Muhtar Kent said.

Huiyuan said it respected the government's decision and would continue its operations. Its Hong Kong-listed stock was suspended before plunging 19 percent to HK \$8.30 (7.32 yuan).

The ministry began to review the deal last November.



The government's rejection put an end to the controversial takeover on Wednesday.

IC Photo

## Expert view

The government's decision divided experts and market watchers: some said it may help build a fair market for competition, while others were worried it may trigger a tide of protectionism.

Zhang Junsheng, an economics professor at the University of International Business and Economics, was among the supporters. "This decision aims

to maintain competition and avoid potential hostile competition," Zhang told Xinhua.

Zhang said the move will help both domestic and overseas juice makers to compete fairly.

Kang Yan, vice director and partner of the Roland Berger consultant, said the rejection could give excuses to China's critics.

"This issue will likely be seen

as protectionism and give other countries an excuse to reject China's investments overseas," Kang said.

The ministry anticipated a rejection would hurt foreign investment, but the government can still be bent by pressure from the public and domestic media, especially jingoistic cyber-patriots, Kang said.

## Voice

The rejection shocked international investors.

The European Union Chamber of Commerce in China issued a statement Wednesday saying "the Chamber believes that this goal can best be achieved by welcoming more international investors into the

Chinese market through eased restrictions and greater transparency, and by lowering any existing barriers to market entry and expansion."

The Chamber urged that the findings of the investigation and the ministry's reason for rejecting the takeover be

made public.

The American Chamber of Commerce in China declined to comment on the ruling. An official with the chamber said the issue may scare away foreign investors who would like to acquire any Chinese business with a famous brand.

## Economy stabilizing, World Bank says

The economy is showing "early signs" of stabilizing in China as government-backed investment counters a slump in exports, the World Bank says.

The lender cut its forecast for the nation's economic growth this year to 6.5 percent in its quarterly report. The estimate was 7.5 percent in November.

The country is weathering the global slowdown better than many nations because its banks were largely unscathed by the financial crisis and the government quickly implemented a 4-trillion-yuan stimulus plan, the lender said. Government-influenced investment will surge 26 percent this year and contribute to three-quarters of the economic expansion, it said.

"The government's stimulus is working," Louis Kuijs, a senior economist at the World Bank, said. "China's fundamentals are strong enough to ride out this storm."

### Investment, consumption

Still, the government should focus less on short-term targets for GDP and more on boosting consumption to rebalance the economy away from capital-intensive industrial investment, the lender said.

The new and former World Bank forecasts both predict the weakest growth since 1990, after a slowdown deepened in the fourth quarter of last year.

"There have at least been early signs of stabilization, although, given international weakness, it is too early to expect a sustained rebound," the lender said. "China's growth can only rebound significantly and sustainably if the world economy recovers, and this does not seem likely to happen soon."

### Deflation Risk

The government can counter the risk of deflation by removing price controls to let costs rise for "some industrial inputs - energy, water, utilities, natural resources and the environment," the report said.

Depreciation of the yuan would be unlikely to stimulate export demand and unhelpful for boosting consumption, the World Bank said. The exchange rate will be supported "in the medium term" by the nation's current-account surplus, it said.

## Volkswagen sticks to expansion plans

Volkswagen AG said Wednesday that it would hold to its plans for investment and the introduction of new models in China despite the world economic downturn.

The Germany-based carmaker plans to increase its production capacity in its largest foreign market this year by 5 percent to 50,000 cars, Winfried Vahland, head of Volkswagen's operations in China, said.

Vahland described the carmaker as remaining optimistic on this year's business outlook although not as positive as it has been in the past.

Total car sales in China for the first two months of the year grew in the low two-digit range, Vahland said. (Agencies)

## Sina sponsors China Open in tennis gala

By Huang Daohen

The 2009 China Open, the country's top level tennis event, got a financial boost Wednesday when it signed a sponsorship deal with Sina.com.

According to the agreement, Sina.com, the country's most popular Web portal, will invest up to 100 million yuan to promote this year's joint WTA and ATP tour, the event's organizer told the press conference, but no details of the agreement were released.

Sina will also help establish an official Web site for the event at chinaopen.com.cn.

The deal came as a relief to the event's organizers, who are trying hard to woo sponsors amid the current global financial turmoil.

This year, the level of China Open takes a huge leap as Beijing has become one of the 10 cities to host the ATP 500 Series. The



The organizer said the cooperation would make for a better tennis tournament this year.

Photo by Felix Yuan

men's meet has been upgraded from a secondary tournament to the ATP 500 Series, while the women's meet was upgraded to a Crown-Pearl tournament.

With the upgrade comes

financial burden. The prize money has been increased to 4.5 billion yuan from last year's 738 million. The upgrade also requires more careful selection of Open sponsors.

"The economic slowdown hurt us, but we are working hard to overcome difficulties," Zhang Junhui, managing director of China Open, said.

The government will fully support the tournament's upgrade, as it is an important step in the development of Beijing's sports industry, said Sun Kanglin, executive chairman of the organizing committee and administrator of the Beijing Sports Bureau.

"The Beijing financial bureau has set up a special fund for sports to ensure an excellent event," Sun said.

"Rapid development of the sports industry in China has been inspired by the 2008 Olympic Games. Tennis will certainly benefit from it," Sun said.

This year's tournament will be held in early October at the National Tennis Center, which was constructed for the Olympics.

# Feng shui defeated by Western culture?



Ma Wei Xinhua Photo

By Zhao Hongyi

Wuhan University of Science and Technology is only 10 years old, but has already built a reputation nationwide because of a "feng shui course" it introduced then scrapped.

The university first offered the elective course last spring, but had to give it up this week. The reason, according to a university statement, is that "the course has brought a negative effect to the university."

Fengshui, which means wind and water in Chinese, is a geomantic practice in which a structure or site is chosen or configured so as to harmonize with the spiritual forces that inhabit it. Its theories date back 6,000 years and guide the construction of buildings and cemeteries, and the decoration of homes.

Ma Wei, 34, introduced and taught the course at the university's School of Urban Construction.

"I've tried my best to link my feng shui lectures with modern, scientific methods of selecting construction sites," the teacher said. "But they say it's superstitious."

Ma had 80 students in the first semester it was offered. The number rose to 130 that autumn, during which time local media took notice of it.

This brought the course to the attention of local education authorities, who objected to it.

This past winter, when Ma was preparing the course's syllabus for 2009, he changed its title from "Construction and Fengshui" to "Construction and Kanyu," instead of "Construction and Environment" as required by his school. *Kanyu* is another term for feng shui, and refers to the "tao of heaven and earth." The two thought systems focus on geopathology and geomedicine.

Ma's kanyu course was also cancelled, so he opened one on US culture instead. But students still preferred to discuss theories of selecting building sites based on the influence of sunlight, wind, water and transportation.

"We chose the course because we were curious about it," Wang Jun, a student, said. "We can pick out the useful stuff from the nonsense, or superstition as they say."

Wuhan University of Science and Technology was not the first to treat feng shui as an academic subject. Anhui University opened the same course in 2000, followed by Nanjing Normal University and Southeast University, also in Nanjing.

## Comment

### The right to learn

*We should be able to study the course just like we study the required traditional Chinese literature classes.*

— a student at Wuhan University of Science and Technology

### Rich pool of knowledge

*Like traditional Chinese medicine, feng shui is a rich pool of knowledge accumulated by our ancestors over*

*thousands of years. It has practical uses.*

— Wang Shibao, an assistant professor at Southeast University

### Leading students down the wrong path

*The young teacher should instruct himself first and lead our children in the right direction. It's useless to emphasize non-mainstream ideas and courses just to show his greatness!*

— a professor at Wuhan University of Science and Technology

### Judgment without knowledge

*It shows we have a cultural history gap here. We should know what feng shui is before saying whether it is good or bad.*

— Yu Xixian, a professor at the College of Environmental Science and Engineering, Peking University

## Reaction

This week, over 20,000 students and netizens condemned local authorities and the Wuhan University of Science and Technology for objecting to the feng shui course.

The loudest voices said universities should be open to various theories and ideologies.

Some said many universities in the country have already

offered non-mainstream electives like The Study of Homosexuality, Golf and India's Raj Frangrance.

They also questioned local authorities' stance of putting US culture above a traditional Chinese practice.

But opposing voices were equally belligerent.

"Feng shui has many non-

sensical teachings. Its useful teachings are commonly seen in the fields of environment, construction, geology, ecology and psychology," Wu Shuangjian, a commentator on news portal cnhubei.com, said. "We should further improve our teachings in this scientific and technological field rather than picking up feng shui as a new topic."

## BEIJING TODAY

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# Transcending the laowai label through music



*I think there's no doubt that Beijing will eventually be no different from anywhere else from a music perspective, Campbell said.*

Photo provided by Jon Campbell

By Wang Yu

Tomorrow may become one of the most memorable days in Jon Campbell's life. After his being immersed in the local music scene for nine years, Campbell's band RandomK(e) will release its first album at a gig that also celebrates its fourth anniversary.

Aside from his identity as RandomK(e)'s drummer, Campbell is well-known in Beijing's music circles as a successful promoter. "I can't remember how many music events I've already organized," he said. In almost a decade in China, the ups and downs he has gone through make for an exciting biography.

## From the west to the east

Canada-born Campbell's first time in the country was in 1997, when he went to Xiamen for a summer Chinese program.

At New Brunswick's Mount Allison University where he went to college, he found himself wanting to learn more about China. "One of the first courses I ever took in university was an Asian Religions course. From there, I focused more and more on China, and I was my university's first graduate with an Asian Studies major," he said.

Afterwards, he attended graduate school at the University of Washington in Seattle and received his masters in interna-

tional studies. He then found a scholarship that brought him to the Beijing Language and Culture University in 2000.

But music has always been in Campbell's blood, and he found himself gravitating towards the Chinese music scene. He soon realized that most of the music he brought from the States was already outdated. "Once I got here, I realized that everything that I thought, that I knew, was old. There were more interesting things happening," he said.

## The emergence of a music promoter

Campbell started playing drums at 13, but decided to trade it for a guitar. "A week before I came to Beijing, I sold my drum set and bought a guitar because it's easier to take to China than drums," he said.

Soon after arriving in Beijing, he went to a music store and asked if they could give him guitar lessons. "Then they said, 'well our band needs a drummer.'" He ended up joining a band called Wood, which marked his entry to the local music scene.

He also wrote about music as a freelancer. He started at the bilingual, bi-weekly magazine *Jianwen*, an entertainment guide which has long folded. He then worked with *That's Beijing* and newspapers and Web sites based overseas.

In 2005, Campbell opened

his events organizing business YGTwo, called Yanggui Yaogun in Chinese. This opened another chapter of challenges in his life.

That year, Peking University staged the Time Arts Jazz series organized by Campbell. "When we first brought up the idea of a folk show in a theater, they were worried that the artists might play drums. I wondered why, and they said that with drums, it gets exciting, and when it gets exciting, it gets chaotic and then troubles follow," he said.

"But soon after we brought in the Steve Koven Trio. The theater management's first reaction was that jazz was for smoky underground bars, and not for a theater of their stature. My partner asked if they considered Bill Clinton, the former president of the US as not suitable. After all, he, and countless other presidents, prime ministers, ambassadors and business leaders, are jazz musicians. That won them over," Campbell said.

Jazz is not the kind of music that Beijingers easily get into, but Campbell helped make advancements. "The theater saw the student audience grow very quickly, and it's been smooth sailing since," he said.

Campbell also helps manage the Beijing garage-rock group Subs. "(They) call me their manager, but I didn't know the difference between a band manager and a

tour manager before I brought Subs to Europe," he said. "I've never done these things before I came to Beijing, I learnt everything here."

## Labels do not always help

Campbell, who speaks Chinese fluently, has been a witness to the growth of the local music scene. "It's come a long way, but I urge people not to believe all the hype. We've still got a way to go," he said.

Aside from RandomK(e), Campbell also manages Black Cat Bone. Although both bands are composed of foreigners which makes it easier for them to get bookings at local clubs, Campbell would rather describe them as "Beijing bands."

"We have Canadians, Americans, Swedes, New Zealanders and Brits. Bands like these do not exist anywhere else," he said. "If we didn't meet each other in Beijing, the bands won't exist. If we're not a Beijing band, then what is a Beijing band?"

"Beijing, being a capital city, is a city of *waidiren*. I am a *waidiren*. I've been in Beijing longer than many Chinese *waidiren*. Are they more Beijing than I am? I don't like the idea of using 'foreigner' as a label, because it's a completely useless way of getting someone to understand what our music sounds like."



Sarah Brightman

## Sarah Brightman to hold concert in Beijing

By Jin Zhu

British diva Sarah Brightman returns to Beijing for a concert Sunday following her performance at last summer's Olympic Games.

Concert organizers say that the most awaited number in the China leg of her 2009 world tour is the Beijing Olympics theme song "You and Me," which Brightman performed with singer Liu Huan at the Games' opening ceremony.

This time, details about her singing partner – and whether or not it will still be Liu – are being kept secret.

The classical crossover soprano will also present "La Luna," a piece adapted from Antonin Dvorak's "Song to the Moon," and hit Broadway songs such as "Time to Say Goodbye."

Her repertoire likewise includes "My Heart Will Go On," theme song of the film Titanic, which Brightman will perform in Spanish using classical opera and pop music techniques.

The concert at the Beijing Gymnasium on March 22 promises a spectacular set design, organizers said. The stage will be transformed into a garden, an underwater world and an ice kingdom.

Brightman debuted as a performer with a dance troupe. She released her first disco single in 1978, at 18 years old. Three years later, her name became bigger as a musical performer. In 1984, she married musical composer Andrew Lloyd Webber, but the union ended six years later and generated concern about her three unsuccessful marriages.

Brightman then remade herself into a crossover artist, combining classical vocal renditions with pop-inspired instrumentation and arrangements. To date, her albums have generated 150 gold and platinum awards in 34 countries all over the world.

# US 'national treasure' performs African-American spirituals



The Howard University Choir has performed for every US president since 1974 at the White House.

Photo provided by US Embassy in China

By Han Manman

In celebration of Barack Obama's inauguration as US president, members of the Howard University Choir came to Beijing on Monday for a 10-day China tour.

As resident choir of the US's pre-eminent African-American University, the group has been recognized as a "national treasure."

The choir, represented by 16 members, gave its first China show Monday evening at the US Embassy. All its 13 songs were related to the African-American com-

munity, including the spiritual hymn "I Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray" and the communal work song "Keep A-Inchin' Along."

J. Weldon Norris, the choir conductor, said that even in the US, few have a chance to hear African-American spirituals songs.

"When we tour the world, many come to me and ask me to teach them the spirituals. I told them, these kinds of songs cannot be learned in a couple of days. I've spent my entire life studying and researching them," said Norris, who fell in love with the music as a boy through his grandfa-

ther, a church pianist.

When eight male members performed "Marry A Woman Uglier than You" with exaggerated choreography, it evoked gales of laughter from the audience and brought the show to a climax.

"This visit will be one of our major events this year and provides us with a rare opportunity to expose the Chinese public to a music genre that they have rarely, if ever, heard before," Frank Whitaker, assistant cultural affairs officer at the US Embassy, said.

The choir will present a series of concerts in four other cities: Shenyang, Chengdu, Guangzhou and either Nanjing or Shanghai. Its repertoire will include classical music, folk songs and its signature African-American spirituals.

Norris will also give a series of lectures titled "The African-American Spiritual," and will conduct musical workshops at several leading universities.

Since 1974, the choir has performed for every US president at the White House, including new president Obama.

## Irish festival marks St Patrick's Day

By Zheng Lu

The Irish Embassy sponsored a week-long cultural festival in celebration of Ireland's national day on March 17.

The Irish Cultural Festival kicked off in Wangfujing last Sunday with traditional music and dance. The Celtic Dragons, a 12-member group made up of Irish children ages 6 to 18, performed Irish dances reminiscent of theatrical show *River Dance*.

Katie Targett-Adams, a professional Celtic harpist, singer and songwriter who just moved to Beijing, played Chinese pop songs and Irish folk songs with her harp. Together with a Chinese college student, she sang the Chinese version of "Auld Lang Syne," an Irish folk song.

Declan Kelleher, the Irish ambassador, said that 17 million Irish people worldwide celebrated the holiday known as St. Patrick's Day.

Kelleher said that since this year marks the 30th year of diplomatic relations between China and Ireland, the festival offered a chance for the two countries to strengthen ties. In particular, the ambassador said he hoped the affair would be a window for Chinese people to become more familiar with Irish culture and lifestyle.

To date, the two nations have worked together in fields like education and travel, "among which we deem cultural cooperation as most important," Kelleher said.

Kelleher said Irish President Mary



Irish artists and Chinese people celebrate the Irish Cultural Festival.

Photo by Zheng Lu

McAleese has praised the Irish people in Beijing for their rich program of cultural activities.

The cultural festival presented other art activities and shows. Ultrasound, a popular Irish band, brought their classic hits to the town, while artists Fion Gunn and Ray

Murphy held a group exhibition entitled *Our Books, Our Lives and City*.

Helen Steele, considered one of Ireland's greatest artists who create works related to environmental and ecological concerns, is holding an exhibition at the Irish embassy until the end of the month.

## Chilean wine targets Chinese middle class

By Annie Wei

To present Chilean wine to the growing Chinese middle class, the Embassy of Chile sponsored a wine event Tuesday. It also aimed to enhance trade between China and Chile.

The event, called "wine from a noble land," was the first such gathering at the embassy this year. It introduced Chilean wine brand Terranoble to the country's biggest local importer, China Textile Resources.

"China has 23 million members of the middle class, and they enjoy imported products. To stand out in this competitive market, Chilean wine should enhance its promotion," Mario Artaza, director Commercial Office Trade Representative Beijing, said.

Chile is confident of the foothold of its wine exports to China. According to the embassy, China in 2008 imported wine worth US\$ 14 million (95 million yuan), an increase of 70 percent compared to 2007 figures.

Steven Bai, vice general manager of China Textile Resources, one of the country's leading state-owned import and export groups, said that at present, they were not interested in any other kinds of alcoholic drinks but wine.

He said the recession would not affect their wine imports from Chile. After all, Chilean wine is inexpensive, good quality and becoming more popular among local consumers, he said.



# Seeking a dark night

By Zheng Lu

The city will go black for an hour next Saturday night in solidarity with hundreds of millions of people. Earth Hour, a worldwide event to combat climate change, may become the biggest mass activity in history. At least 80 countries and 1,500 cities all over the globe will turn off their lights at 8:30 pm local time on March 28.



The Jinjiang Star Hotel in Hangzhou volunteered to join the Earth Hour last year.

CFP Photo

## From 2 million to 1 billion

Earth Hour, organized by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), was launched in Sydney, Australia two years ago. About 2.2 million households and offices in the city switched off their lights for an hour that March 31.

A year later, 5 million people in 35 countries participated. Major landmarks such as the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, the Colosseum in Rome and the Coca-Cola billboard in New York City's Times Square became shrouded in darkness.

In December, WWF announced bigger goals for the third Earth Hour: They aimed to involved a billion people in 1,000 cities and 64 countries. Little did they know the number of interested parties would exceed their expectations.

"It is as easy as switching off a light," Su Xiaowei, Earth Hour project manager of WWF China, said. "From Europe to America, people and communities have been encouraged to do this small act," she said, adding that they, along with enterprises will play a crucial role in the event's success. Next week, WWF will release a list of places which will participate in Earth Hour 2009, Su said.

## Bringing the hour to China

This year is the first time China is participating in Earth Hour. And Su feels the burden of making the event known to citizens and the government.

"We have spent nearly half a year promoting the event in the country, but we're unsure of the result since it is mainly known in Beijing and Shanghai," she said, adding that her job felt like an election campaign. But Su takes heart in the fact that hundreds of cities around the world have already signed up.

According to a recent news release from WWF, green energy hotspot Baoding in Hebei Province will switch off lights,



People will have to use candle light during the 60-minute blackout.

Photo provided by WWF

along with landmark buildings in cities like Dalian, Chengdu, Wuhan and Foshan.

IKEA, Wal-Mart and the Beijing and Shanghai New World Shopping Centers are among the enterprises that have agreed to support Earth Hour. Student groups from over 100 colleges and universities across the country also want to be counted.

"Every day, we receive lots of emails from middle school students asking us to involve the cities they live in," Su said.

Residents in some cities have also taken the lead in gathering support within their locality. "I'm delighted to see that they don't even need our presence to lead," Su said, adding that she already considered this an achievement.

## Controlling the light switch

Yu Qun, the mayor of Baoding with a population of 10 million, said the economic hub was striving to reduce their carbon emissions. "Turning off lights may be a small act, but has huge meaning behind it. Baoding will act more in a similar way in the future," he said.

Organizers are also counting on past participants for help. Amanda Barry, who comes from Melbourne and has joined Earth Hours the past two years, is again part of the event this year, along the Australia China Alumni Association (ACAA) where she is communications manager.

"It's a great way for our members to raise awareness about climate change by bringing an Australian-born event to China," she said. She still remembers the previous Earth Hours with awe, in which she said thousands of people gathered along Melbourne's river and watched as the city's Federation Square went dark.

Meanwhile, many people who once did not realize the importance of energy-saving are pitching in. "I used to leave the computer on the whole day," said Gou Gou, a professional photographer in Dalian. Along with her friends, she will take pictures around her city when it switches off lights on March 28. "We used to take pictures of things like people and trees. This time we feel we could take photos of more mean-

ingful things," she said.

## Weighing the effects

Earth Hour has become a hot topic in Chinese bulletin boards online, and there are netizens who question how much help the hour-long activity can actually bring.

"We used to participate in such activities. We saw switching off lights and having a candlelight dinner as a romantic thing," Wang Xiaogang, the leader of an underground Beijing band said. But he added, "Can we really accomplish the great work of energy-saving in such an atmosphere?"

Dermot O'Gorman, a WWF official, said in a news conference that turning off power for an hour does not really save much energy, but that it has an educational aspect that is immeasurable. "China has made improvements in raising people's consciousness about environmental protection," he said.

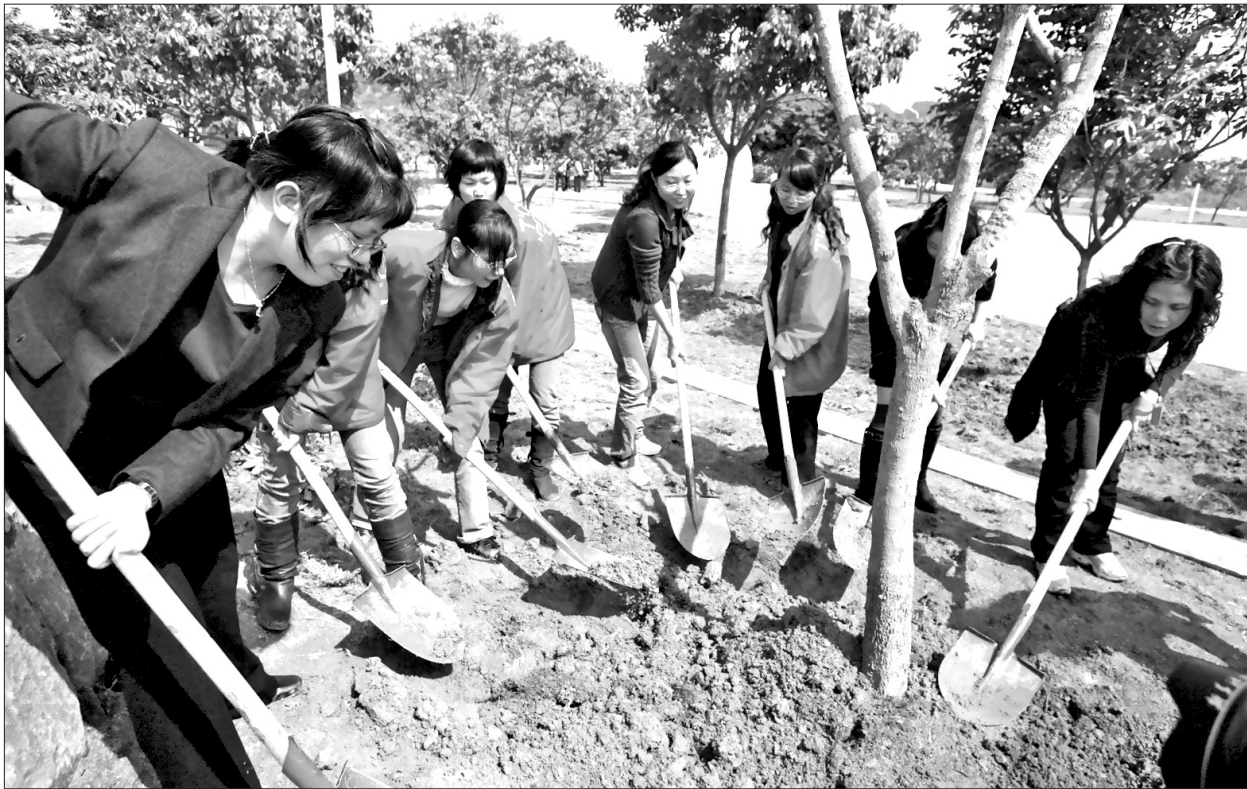
Su, the event's manager in China, said WWF sees it as a way to get people's support in fighting climate change.

The Australia China Alumni Association, together with the Australian Chamber of Commerce in Beijing, will be holding a fund-raiser on Earth Hour night. "People will socialize by candlelight," Barry of ACAA said. But most importantly, they want to motivate people to make fighting climate a part of their daily lives.

Meanwhile, some people have been inspired to adopt the system of Daylight Saving Time (DST), in which many European and American countries turn back their clocks an hour to maximize the use of sunlight.

People who support the idea say that DST saves Britain 15 percent of its energy consumption each year. "For us Chinese, there is still a long way to go in saving energy," a netizen named Wang Bin said. "We should think of more solutions to environmental problems."

# Trees and grasslands up for adoption



Sponsors are entitled to name their tree or grassland.

CFP Photo

By Zhao Hongyi

For less than 100 yuan, people will earn the right to name a piece of grassland or forested area. The Capital Forestation Commission is encouraging citizens and business enterprises to join the adoption program this year as a contribution to the city's development.

After three decades of work, Beijing has built two "green belts" along the fourth and fifth ring roads, and reforested hundreds of plots of land along rivers, highways and lakes. This has reduced sandstorms and air pollution within the capital, the commission said.

Adoption is affordable: Every square meter of grassland costs 6.50 yuan a year, while a tree costs 30 to 50 yuan a year. Older trees, which need more care, cost 1,500 to 2,000 yuan a year.

In return for the financial support, sponsors can plant trees or grass on their land, and can visit their trees and lands any time. They will also be entitled to choose names for their adopted trees and grasslands.

"It's a charity rather than a business," Tong Yonghong, director of the commission, said.

The program welcomes Chinese as well as foreign firms and individuals. It covers all of the city's 18 districts, which means plots of land downtown or in the mountains are up for adoption.

## Contacts for adopting trees and grasslands

Individuals or companies who are interested in joining the program, or who would like to find out more about it, can get in touch with the people listed on the box.

District	Contact	Telephone
Dongcheng	Wang Xin	6404 0580
Xicheng	Kang Xin	6802 5240
Chongwen	Zhang Jing	6714 2073
Xuan Wu	Zhou Xiaorong	6351 7984
Chaoyang	Guo Lina	8581 7037
Haidian	Zhai Ling	82475952
Fengtai	Shi Guang	6385 3740
Shijingshan	Wang Xiuhua	6865 0422
Mengtougou	Zhao Jing	6984 4610
Tongzhou	Hong Weijun	8151 2847
Shunyi	Yang Xu	8944 3753
Changping	Su Xuemin	6076 1091
Daxing	Zhao Mingyang	8129 6505

# Drivers get road fee refund

By Annie Wei

The city's transport authorities have announced they will refund car owners road maintenance fees worth 1.5 billion yuan beginning April 16. This is to compensate them for restrictions on the use of their cars during the Beijing Olympics.

Road maintenance fee, collected as part of the gas fee, stirred debate when the restrictions were implemented.

To promote better air quality and smoother traffic during the Games, the Beijing Municipal Committee of Communications only allowed each vehicle to go on the road every other day based on its plate number.

The commission said it would return a total of 1.5 billion yuan covering 2.7 million vehicles, 80 percent of which are private cars. A van with at least five seats will be repaid 440 yuan, it said.

A person who has no more than two vehicles registered under his or her name, and who held a Mudan Card with the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) when the car was registered, will get the money through the bank account.

Owners of more than two cars should contact the transport office for more information.

People who do not want the money deposited directly into their ICBC account should visit a transport office branch before 4 pm, April 15. A valid ID and driver's license need to be presented in order to change the repayment method.

To check if the refund has gone through, car owners can visit ylfzhi.bj.cn or call ICBC's hotline at 95588 after May 15.

Below are transport office branches in areas with large expat populations. People can visit the branch where they are close to.

**Where:** Tuanjiehu Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 8598 2024

**Where:** 19 Nan Sanhuan Xi Lu, Fengtai District

Tel: 6353 8598

**Where:** 23 Zhiqiangyuan, Xiaoxitian, Haidian District

Tel: 6225 7789

**Where:** Chaobai Da Qiao Dong, Shunyi District

Tel: 8947 0169



Beijing's traffic was better last summer.

CFP Photo

# Buying carbon emissions gaining ground

By Venus Lee

China celebrated last Thursday its 31st National Arbor Day, a holiday in which people are encouraged to plant and care for trees. But since most people are too busy to plant trees, buying carbon offsets has become a popular alternative.

When the emission of carbon dioxide cannot be avoided or reduced, "offsetting" is the most practical way to minimize its negative impact. Offsetting carbon emissions means fixing a price to the cost of a polluting activity, such as flying, driving a car or cooling a room.

People in Beijing can purchase carbon offsets online at bcs.gov.cn. Buyers will get an invoice, a certificate and a logo from the China Green Carbon Fund (CGCF), which mobilizes enterprises, organizations and individuals to join tree planting and other forest protection activities. They can also check toward which tree-planting program their donations go.

"Carbon credits act like certificates that represent a reduction of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and can be traded, purchased or sold in the market," Zhang Qiang, the CGCF spokesman, said. "For individuals, 1,000 yuan can get 5.6 tons of carbon offset."

Wu Xiaofu, the vice president of Central South University of Forestry and Technology, presented to his wife on their wedding anniversary an offsetting invoice and certificate worth of 10,000 yuan. "Some friends of mine give carbon offsets to their children as a birthday present, and some of them give it as present on their wedding anniversary," he said.

According to the State Forestry Bureau, previous individual donations received in Beijing were spent on the reforestation of an area near the Badaling Great Wall. Next, the bureau plans to plant trees in poverty-stricken areas in Inner Mongolia.

Travelers who make their arrangements at Ctrip.com, a consolidator of hotel accommodations and airline tickets, can offset their carbon footprint by earning points that can be redeemed to help conserve resources, plant trees and decrease carbon emissions.

## ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: [weiyang@ynet.com](mailto:weiyang@ynet.com)

**Where can shoppers find information on digital products? It might be a good idea to do some research first before heading to Zhongguancun.**

You can try Web sites that do price comparisons, like bjia.cn or beargoo.com. These sites collect product information from as many distributors as they can reach. Along with providing a product's price, they also include sellers' phone numbers. They are becoming more popular among locals.

**I'm planning to rent an apartment, but the landlord only has the deed of sale to prove that he is in fact the owner. He said it takes six months to get the title deed. Is this really the normal process?**

New buyers have to wait a long period before they receive their title deed or *fangchanzheng*. If you want to be sure that such is the case with your landlord, you can check with the local property management.

(By Wei Ying)



“When we visit the museum, we accept all its exhibitions as fact. I want people to learn to doubt everything.”

“Laughter is a moment when our mind refuses to reason.”



The laughing face has become Yue Minjun's icon and it appears again in his latest work.

Photos provided by Yue Minjun

# I d Reality

By He Jianwei

He is one of the legends of contemporary Chinese art.  
He has set records at auctions.  
He was named Person of the Year.  
He is Yue Minjun, an artist with a wit. His latest works ob

From the CBD area, it took him an hour to get to Yue's studio in the 798 Art Zone, home to him and many other artists.

A dry lotus pool sits before the studio. Near the pool is a sculpture of a laughing man, an icon that is a reoccurring theme in his paintings and sculptures.

His latest paintings and sculptures are in his studio. In his large living room, he talks about ideas and how he will next express them.

The difference between this time and last time is its focus: This time, it is not just about himself, but also how it is displayed.

Yue's aim is a 1,000-year tradition of Chinese archaeologists of tomorrow.

In this imagined archeology, he has collected pieces by Yue. It includes his own work. A man sees his modern country through the eyes of an ancient man, enforces himself through relics.

But as modern man has grown, the future of his grandfather, future man's assumption, is right ridiculous.

“The knowledge from our country is not reliable. I do not believe in ‘conclusion’ for a long time for us to sort out what is wrong. Answering that question is the exhibition's goal,” Yue says.

He says people have a stereotype of him. “We have been told that a pig. It is ridiculous to say that a pig wears a suit,” he says.

## Archeology Solo Exhibition

Where: Second floor exhibition hall  
When: Daily, 10 am – 5 pm  
Tel: 5876 0600

# Do not believe'

## y from the angle of tomorrow

ends of contemporary Chinese art. His “laughing face” was the permanent icon of the last decade. international art auctions the last three years. In 2007, “Execution” became the most expensive work sold by a artist when it went for 30 million yuan at London’s Sotheby’s. n of the Year 2007 by *Time Magazine*: the only Chinese national on its list of ten. influential artist in the Cynical Realist movement of the last decade: A man who takes down the lofty with his whip-like serve reality from the angle of the future.

takes 40 minutes to get east: Songzhuang Artist and some 2,000 other a two-story building. a laughing man. The the house, appearing in sculptures dry in his n, Yue explains his new eriment with paint. s exhibit and Yue’s last t just the creation of art yed. time shift: When the earh the relics of today. ical exhibition is a series ages of how future art: How he experi- ossly misunderstood his umptions may be down- daily life is not always mmon sense.’ It takes hat is right and what tion is part of this exhi- eotype about learning d this is a cup and this is at it is not a pig when the

Yue began to plan the exhibition in 2006. Although he denies any sci-fi influences, he does admit the genre’s accurate reflection of the modern. “But sci-fi is, by definition, too enamored with science,” he says. Visitors to his exhibition see familiar objects – but not as they know them. Rediscovered 1,000 years later, future archaeologists have created a canon of new names and uses for banal tools, and Yue has a story for each piece. “The exhibition should make visitors feel like they are in a natural history museum. By 3009, the straw hat has become a ‘basin’ excavated from Dama Village. It was used to crown their king,” he says. The problem, Yue says, is that “when we visit the museum, we accept all its exhibitions as fact. I want people to learn to doubt everything,” he says. His icon, the laughing face, returns to his painting and sculpture again. But now it is worn by future pet dinosaurs. Yue created the face almost 20 years ago. In 1989, after his graduation from college, Yue began his quest for his own style. “At first I drew only several versions of myself. It was a technical exercise and not that complicated. I didn’t want to find a model, though we were told at college that every creation has to have one,” he says. Already he was deviating from convention. Yue’s characters have large faces, open mouths and closed eyes. He paints his characters looking at his own photos. Although most portraits are caught in a wild laugh, Yue is shy and introverted. He poses and has his

younger brother photograph him whenever he needs to work out a new stance. A hundred people read Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* and come up with a hundred interpretations. The same can be said of Yue’s laughter. “I paint people laughing, whether it is a big laugh, a restrained laugh, a crazy laugh, a near-death laugh or simply laughter about our life: Laughter can be about anything,” he says. He understands people’s decoding of his work. When he had exhibitions in the US and Europe, people who knew little of China found happiness in Yue’s work. “They did not understand the circumstances in which I created them,” he says. But in China, where some viewers share his experiences, the silent mockery is not lost. The laughing faces represent Yue’s confusion about reality. “Laughter is a moment when our mind refuses to reason. When we are puzzled, our mind simply doesn’t want to struggle – or perhaps we don’t know how to think – so we just want to forget,” he says. Although Yue denies that the laughing face is his signature, he continues to create laughing characters. In the *Maze* series, made in 2006, he painted the inside of a laughing character’s brain. “People can’t see the laughing face in this piece. The idea was to show the inside of his brains – to show the maze. His laughter was born out of confusion.” Art critic Li Xianting said Yue is the most representative of the cynical artist, and his mockery expresses a vast doubt of the universe.

“I paint people laughing, whether it is a big laugh, a restrained laugh, a crazy laugh, a near-death laugh or simply laughter about our life: Laughter can be about anything.”

## ogical Discovery in AD 3009

### n of Yue Minjun

hibition hall at Building 1, Today Art Museum, 32 Baiziwang Lu, Chaoyang District n, March 21 – April 19

# Beijing's food scene in a tasty text

By Annie Wei

Long-time food critic and freelance contributor to publications domestic and abroad Eileen Wen Mooney just released her second book: *Beijing Eats* (335pp, China Population Publishing House, 100 yuan), a comprehensive guide to dining in the capital.

*Beijing Eats* describes China's diverse cooking styles, breaking cuisine into 30 distinct groups, including lesser known cuisines from Anhui, Jiangxi, Guizhou and Tibet. Mooney introduces the historical context in which each cuisine evolved, and follows it with a list of classic dishes and where to enjoy them.

"I have been to some of these restaurants at least a dozen times since my arrival," says Mooney, who moved to China in 1994. She visited no less than 1,000 restaurants in Beijing while compiling the book over three years.

*Beijing Eats* is well organized and user friendly. The names of dishes are given in English, Chinese and *pinyin*. The back of the book contains a glossary of Chinese culinary terms and useful expressions to aid diners in ordering. It also contains useful maps with the exact locations of each of the 140 restaurants in the book.

Her text is peppered with literary anecdotes. An excerpt from *Two Years in the Forbidden City*, by Princess Der Ling (1886-1944), Manchu daughter of the Qing envoy to France, offers a glimpse into the final days of the imperial kitchen.

Mooney says she was inspired to focus on Beijing specialties after reading essays by Chinese literary masters. She quotes scholar Liang Shiqiu, who lamented the lack of lamb's head (baishui yangtou) and fermented mung bean juice (douzhi) when he was away from Beijing, and writer Lao She, who said "Exotic dishes like camel humps and bear paws pale in comparison to cat-ear and fish-shaped noodles."

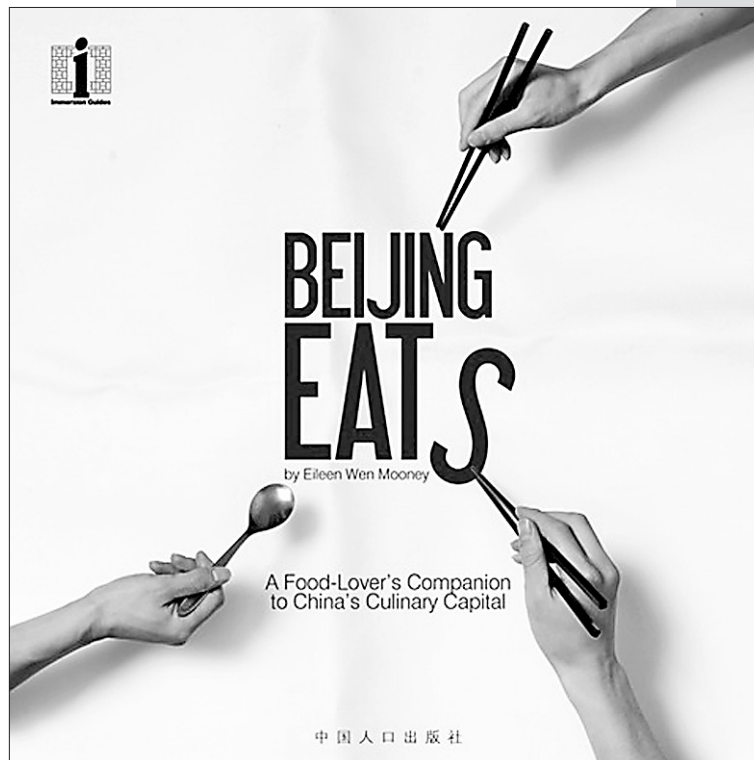
While the book features all

sorts of restaurants, Mooney's top picks are those which focus on the simple side of Chinese cuisine. Among 140 restaurants introduced here, her favorite is Guoyao Xiaoju, a family-run restaurant serving Tan Family dishes, a haute cuisine that dates back to the Qing.

"The food quality is superb and reasonably priced," Mooney says. "No MSG or bul-

For Peking duck, Mooney recommends Duck de Chine, an upscale place with a nice atmosphere, and Xiang Man Lou, popular with locals who come for the reasonably priced duck.

Mooney says she worries that Chinese culinary boundaries are being blurred by the increasing market competition, with many restaurants competing for diners by mixing regional cuisines on



lion is used in Tan cuisine stock, which is made with aged chicken and infused with dried abalone and ham."

Guoyao Xiaoju is one of a handful of Tan Family restaurants still in business in Beijing.

Another favorite is Jun Qin Hua, a hole-in-the-wall eatery that serves low-priced Guizhou food. Owner An Lijun is not a Miao, but she grew up in Kaili City, the capital of the Miao and Dong Minority Autonomous Region. When she moved back to Beijing a decade ago, she opened her small restaurant which serves dishes accented by delicious stone-pounded, fermented chilies.

their menus or experimenting with novel presentation or nouveau cuisine. One of her goals was to "encourage restaurants to stay true to their traditions and remain confident of their own regional cuisines."

It is no surprise then that the book is dedicated to the memory of Qu Qiubai, former head of the Chinese Communist Party from 1927-1928, who had an admirable respect for simple Chinese food.

As he sat in prison awaiting execution by a Kuomintang firing squad in 1935, Qu wrote one last message to the world: "Chinese tofu is very delicious: the best in the world. Farewell!"

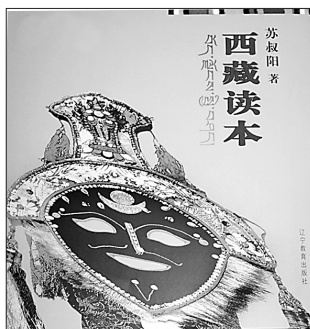
## Unveiling the mystery of Tibet

By Jin Zhu

"Finishing the *Tibet Reader* was my most rewarding experience," said Su Shuyang, author of the 2006 hit *China Reader* which sold 10 million copies overseas.

Su got the idea for the book while at the 58th Frankfurt Book Fair in Germany that year. "Some European people said I should write a book to introduce Tibetan history and present Tibet since I had succeeded in introducing a positive image of China," he said.

Many of them told him that writing from a historic



and academic angle would be an objective way to help foreigners understand the truth about Tibetan issues. Su reviewed 200

classics and 50 video documentaries about Tibet before starting in on the book.

*Tibet Reader* (177pp, Liaoning Education Press, 38 yuan) covers important events during the last 1,400 years of the region's history. It explains the origin, development and current state of Tibet using its history, geography, religion, people and culture.

"The book is more than a textbook. It is a work with an accurate historical view, profound thought and powerful poetic expression," Di Dongsheng, a Remin University professor, said.

The book begins when Princess Wencheng entered Tibet. According to its account, her marriage was not a tool to unify Tang China and Tibet. Songtsen Gampo took initiative to wed the princess to encourage Tibet to civilize.

*Tibet Reader* presents other opinions about disputed cultural quirks, such as the origin of Sun Wukong, the monkey king, a main character in *Journey to the West*. Su said Sun was a macaque in Tibetan legend – not an Indian monkey.

Apart from comparisons

between Tibetan Buddhism and Chinese Buddhism, the book investigates Tibetan history and culture against a background of Chinese culture – even of the world. "Tibet's history is not merely about Tibetan Buddhism, but a part of the Chinese nation's history," he said.

Su said the book aims to correct misunderstandings about Tibetan issues. "It is not a historical overview ... just a book to demystify Tibet. It is in-depth, straightforward and it has a good grasp of everyday life in the region," he said.

## CNPIEC Bookstore book listing

The China National Publication Import and Export Corporation's (CNPIEC) bookstore recommends these new arrivals to *Beijing Today* readers.

**John Howe Fantasy Art Workshop**

By John Howe, 128pp, Impact, 180 yuan

John Howe

is one of the world's most renowned fantasy artists and has for many years worked as a leading illustrator of Tolkien's works and peripheral products. The book

covers a wide range of subjects essential to any aspiring fantasy artist, including materials and the creative process, as well as drawing and painting humans, beasts, landscapes and architecture. Readers will also find further inspiration and guidance on presenting work in various forms including film work, book covers and advertising.

**Tablescapes**

By Kimberly Schlegel Whitman, 192pp, Gibbs Smith, 280 yuan

Whitman

shows how to set the stage for special-occasion meals by setting a table with flair and panache. Featuring some of the most

exquisite china, silver and crystal, she shows how to develop decorating themes appropriate for any occasion: from sit-down dinners for a few guests or buffets for many, to bridal and baby showers, holiday dinners with the family, and al fresco parties at the beach. Personalized table coverings are one of her specialties, and this book has a plethora of ideas.

**New Garden Design: Inspiring Private Paradises**

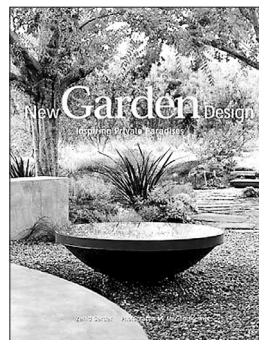
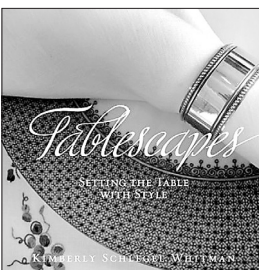
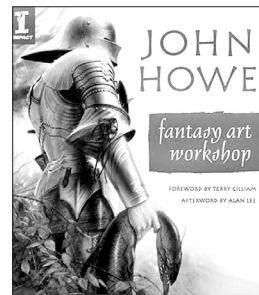
By Zahid Sardar, 248pp, Gibbs Smith, 280 yuan

From vegetable and succulent gardens

to sculpture and rose gardens to mountain and waterfront gardens, the book covers a range of interpretations incorporating walls, fountains, pavilions, canals, pools, terraces and groves in unexpected

ways. The resulting new garden is a pleasure garden vested with spiritual, symbolic and ecological intent.

(By He Jianwei)



# Youngsters cut their teeth on finance game



## Modeled on a bestseller

The game Cash Flow is an educational tool designed by Robert Kiyosaki, author of the bestselling *Rich Dad, Poor Dad*. It aims to teach players how to invest by having their money work for them in a risk-free setting while increasing their financial literacy and accountability.

Kiyosaki created two stages to the game. One is a rat race, in which the player tries to raise his or her character's passive income level to exceed the character's expenses.

After several rounds of play, the winners go to a "fast track" stage. In this stage, players must help their characters buy their "dream."

The game requires players to fill out their own financial statements so that they can see more clearly what is happening with their money.

## Imitating reality

The game has grown very popular the last two years. College students and those new to the workforce are its main players: Some colleges even organize game sessions for their students.

Most players believe that, for an individual, investment means buying stocks or mutual funds. However, the spectrum of finance has many options.

"I love this game, because everything from daily life can happen in the game. It is a rehearsal for the future," Chris Wen, a salesman for an IT company, said.

At first, Wen liked the game, because it was similar to Monopoly. "Both games have colorful boards and deal with investing. But Cash Flow is more realistic than Monopoly," he said.

Cash Flow players worry about falling stock prices and face unemployment and financial ruin.

"If one of the players gives birth to a baby, we have to spend money on gifts. People can be fired from working as a banker taking bribes," he said.

## Flow is important

It takes more than three hours to finish the two stages, but most participants enjoy it. "The game encourages analysis and expression. And more importantly, it teaches how to manage money," Jiang Yan, a college teacher, said.

"I have a new understanding about the roles of income and expense, and know how to avoid risky investments. [Cash Flow] shows how assets generate

income and demonstrates that liabilities are expenses," she said.

But the focus of the game may simply be that money must flow. "You may have a lot of money in the bank or an apartment and a car, but that's hardly enough to qualify you as rich. Rich is a statement about how much money you are moving in and out," Xu Jun, a magazine editor, said.

By He Jianwei

Renting an apartment requires money. Dating requires money. Getting married requires a lot of money.

Many young people are struggling to learn how to manage their money in the face of a growing recession. In this economic climate, a new financial management game has become popular with young people.

Four or six people meet on the weekend to play how to distribute, manage and invest. For many, the game is a rehearsal for real-life financial planning.

## Rethinking reality

Although Cash Flow is just a game, it has inspired many to tackle life's problems.

In the rat-race stage, players have to debate whether to resign from their job to drop their taxes if their income from investments exceeds their expenses. "Before, I thought of a job as a life-long commitment which provided me most of my income by salary. After I played the game, I learned how to live on unearned income," Wen said.

No matter whether playing Cash Flow or Real Life, the principle is the same: "You must have a clear aim, seize every opportunity, invest dauntlessly, increase income and decrease expenditure," Yan said.



Young people are learning how to manage money from the popular game.

CFP Photo

By Wang Yu

In the winter, *Beijing Today* introduced some useless Japanese gadgets clearly made for people who are bored to death. Well, there's more where they came from.

Some people have been trying to inject more fun into life by marrying their weird ideas with the latest technology. The results are creative, hilarious, entertaining and possibly even curative to those with a broken heart.

Joey Zhou, a blogger who runs [ixiqi.com](http://ixiqi.com), is a gadget nut whose main preoccupation is to look out for the newest inventions from every corner of the globe. All the products listed below are available at Zhou's online store [shop35301920.taobao.com](http://shop35301920.taobao.com).



### Robo-Q

This adorable tiny robot is manufactured by Takara Tomy, a Japanese toy company that never fails to impress with each new product it releases. The bipedal Robo-Q series, which hit stores just last month, is only the size of the human thumb. But it is equipped with Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology that gives it a heart and mind big enough to understand commands via remote control. The Robo-Q can also "see." With a push of a button, its "free mode" is triggered, which enables the little robot to walk around without any guidance. Its "built-in obstacle recognition system" helps the Robo-Q detect objects around it, thus preventing it from tripping over things.

The toy also has a "chase mode," in which it can run after certain objects, such as a small ball. Imagine five Robo-Qs on your table, chasing a ball. To join the robot World Cup, use the "manual mode" to control your players and win the game against your friends.

The Robo-Q's charger can be found in its remote control, which can adjust the speed of the robot's tiny steps. The most amazing thing is that in "free mode," the little guy will automatically head for the remote control if the device is placed nearby.

Price: 428 yuan



Photos by Joey Zhou

Kill time with amusing, useless inventions (Episode 2)



### Gun O'clock

In one of his songs, US pop artist John Mayer said that "when you're dreaming with a broken heart, the waking up is the hardest part." But broken heart or not, it is the same every morning when the alarm clock starts beeping. That is maybe why the engineers at Bandai invented this clock, which includes a target and a plastic infrared gun.

When the alarm goes off, the target will pop out of the clock. To stop the beeping, all you have to do is grab the gun under your pillow and hit the bull's eye a few times. After accomplishing your first shooting mission for the day,



you will find yourself wide awake, though maybe a little hostile.

People who want a bigger challenge can select the "difficult mode," which practically trains them to be a sniper. Two shooting games have been built into the system for people who want more practice.

Price: 289 yuan



### Flower Rock 2.0

The Flower Rock is back! People who know the original toy can celebrate 20 years of its existence. Meanwhile, younger collectors have been falling for the flower-like object's colorful LEDs.

Back in the late-1980s, the streets of Japan were swept by Flower Rock mania – a toy that can dance to any kind of music you play. Now, thanks to Sanyo and Takara Tomy, Flower Rock is reborn after getting a makeover.

The product has been upgraded with a "glow function," which allows its petals and leaves to flash up to 50 different kinds of colors, in rhythm with the music. The illumination can also be adjusted according to five levels.

Just plug the Flower Rock into an iPod or other musical device to see its seven grooving dance modes. Its built-in speaker even enhances your musical experience as you watch the flower flash and swing. But note that its speaker does not compare to the real thing. It may dance better than humans, but it is just a nice toy after all.

Price: 398 yuan

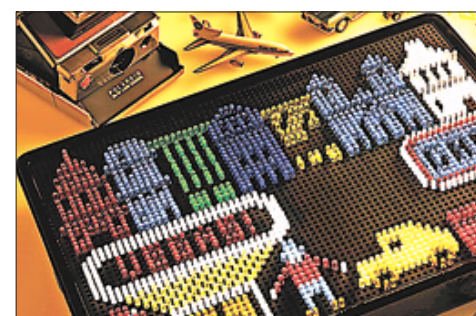


### Q steer

The world's smallest remote-control car, manufactured by Japanese company Tamiya, can run in six directions. With its built-in "S-tech chassis," the Q steer is on a league of its own. It can do race stunts; it can also run only on its hind wheels. The toy's infrared remote control offers two wave bands, which helps players avoid having wave interference with each other.

There are 10 models available, from classic car models like as Skyline GTR and Fair Lady-Z to cartoon figures like Super Mario. The car can fit in your pocket, so owners can bring some fun to work if they can get away with it. It can also be customized by avid car toy-model fans.

Price: 90 yuan



### Luminodot

Have you ever played with the toy where you stick colored plastic pegs onto a hole-filled board to create patterns? With the help of modern lighting technology, Bandai has replaced the plastic pegs with LED pegs.

The Luminodot features a slick frame with a super dense 70x50 grids, which means players can stick a maxim of 3,500 pegs on it. It comes with 1,600 pegs in 12 colors, but fanatics can always buy more. Time is needed to finish the pixel art, so this is ideal for the really bored. This toy's most impressive feature may be its backlighting system.

On top of having LED pegs, the device has 25 preprogrammed animated sequences that will literally make your work flash. Owners can also use an online template generator that will render their designs as PDF files.

Price: 1,299 yuan

# The season for grilled oysters

By Jin Zhu

Seafood lovers everywhere say that the best season for oysters are months that contains the letter "r," when the shellfish become big and fleshy. This means the months from September to the April are the best time to enjoy them. We still have a month left, so dig in!

Charcoal-grilled oyster have recently become popular; grilling brings out its natural flavor while keeping the flesh tender and juicy. Enjoying seafood doesn't have to bore a hole through your wallet, which you will discover at the restaurants listed below.



Grilled scallops  
Photos provided by Haoweitianxia



## Haoweitianxia

The restaurant's name translates in English to "the best oyster in the world" – no secret what its ambitions are. Haoweitianxia specializes in charcoal-grilled seafood, of which oysters are the best-sellers.

"Since oyster is known for its tastiness and rich nutritious content, we try our best to retain the nutrition in our cooking," Chen Yanxu, the restaurant owner, said.

The oysters served here are brought all the way from Zhanjiang, Guangdong Province, the country's main oyster-producing area. After their flesh and shell are cleaned separately, the oysters are grilled and flavored with different spices according to the customer's taste.

Besides using traditional spices like chili peppers and garlic, Haoweitianxia also offers oysters specially flavored with soy sauce, salted soya beans and mushroom sauce.

The place offers two sizes of oysters: regular ones and large ones, priced between 42

and 60 yuan for a dozen oysters. Its menu includes other specials like grilled scallops and roasted cotton candy.

Li Yingyuan, 36, a fashion magazine editor who recently held a dinner party at Haoweitianxia, gave a thumbs-up to the restaurant. "I had a terrible experience with oysters in the past. They had not been properly cleaned and were filled with sand. So I was a bit nervous to try them again. But much to my delight, the oysters served here were thoroughly cleaned and tasted delicious," he said.

First-time customers may have some trouble finding the place, since it is located near a hutong that's tucked away. "Customers should avoid driving here because there aren't many parking places nearby," Li said.

Open: 5:30-11 pm

Where: East end of Gulou Dong Dajie,

Dongcheng District

Tel: 8401 2437

Cost: 42 yuan for a dozen oysters



Grilled oyster with garlic



## Xiangjianxiangshi

Located opposite the east entrance of the University of International Business and Economics, the restaurant's architecture makes it conspicuous.

Its decor, which includes hanging flower pots and ceramic-tiled walls, combines eastern and western styles. Zhang Shaofeng, the restaurant manager, said most of their customers are foreigners, so they have made sure their menu incorporates a variety of flavors.

Charcoal-grilled oyster is one of its most popular dishes, and the ones seasoned with black pepper and XO soy sauce are the top picks of foreign customers.

"Unlike many other restaurants, we spread butter on the oysters before grilling. It makes the flesh more tender and suits the taste of many foreigners," Zhang said.

Also on the menu are peanuts ice smoothies and oat noodles with ravigote.

Thanks to its quiet and homey atmosphere, Xiangjianxiangshi is an ideal place to enjoy a conversation with friends over good food.

Open: 11 am – 10 pm

Where: Building 3, Yard 3, Shaojiaoju, Chaoyang District

Tel: 5827 3666

Cost: 7 yuan for an oyster

Photo provided by  
Xiangjianxiangshi

## Haozhuti Restaurant

Many grilled food lovers in Beijing like Haozhuti because of its traditional cooking style. On top of this, diners also keep going back for the grilled fish, available in 10 different flavors. Fish here can be grilled using two spices at the same time.

Its other grilled specials are eggplant and chives. A bowl of seafood porridge with a pinch of salt and shredded ginger should also come at the end of every meal.

Open: 11 am – 11 pm

Where: 15 Guangximen Bei, Xibahe, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6429 9728

Cost: 36 yuan for a dozen oysters

## Haoku

This is a popular restaurant for grilled oysters in the hutong-filled Dongsitiao area. Haoku is looks much like a hutong home, in keeping with its neighborhood. For people who want to enjoy oysters in a more local atmosphere, nothing beats this place.

Open: 5-11 pm

Where: 82 Dongsitiao, Dongcheng District

Tel: 8404 2104

Cost: 48 yuan for a dozen oysters

# A renaissance master in montage

By He Jianwei

New media artist Miao Xiaochun held his first grand exhibition at Arario Beijing last Saturday. Displays included a 3D animation titled "Microcosm," based on Dutch painter Hieronymus Bosch's "Garden of Earthly Delight."

From his early photographs to their more recent 3D variety, such as "The Last Judgment in Cyberspace" and the H2O series, Miao has always focused on history and the humanities.

His latest work "Microcosm" employed the most advanced computer technology to create a montage of contemporary images over a classical painting.

Miao said he chose the Dutch master's painting as a base because "Bosch is well-known for the use of fantastic imagery to illustrate moral and religious concepts and narratives."

To name the work, he changed the Chinese idiom "looking up at the sky from a well" to "looking down a well from the sky,"

which he translates as "microcosm."

"If the idiom 'looking up at the sky from a well' talks of a person with limited foresight and knowledge who cannot understand the nature of things, then 'looking down a well from the sky' refers to a person who has a bird's eye view, but only looks at the details. Although the point of views has changed, the observer's limitations remain," the artist said.

Miao said he created "Microcosm" not to recover the truth in historical images, but to deduce new meaning from them. "I try to create new images from the tangled relations between reality and the virtual world; the strange and the familiar; intimacy and alienation; and the ego and non-ego," he said.

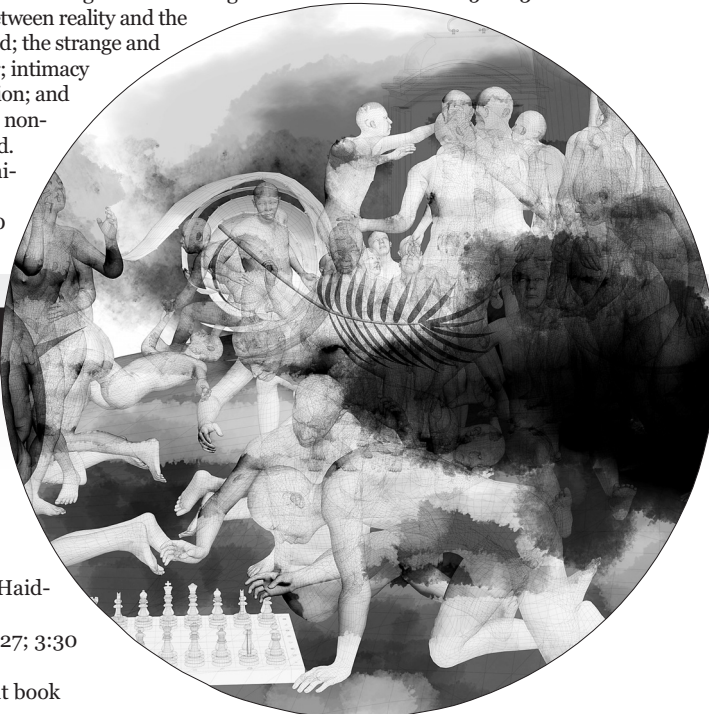
The exhibition also presents 20 of Miao's

other works, including digital ink and wash paintings and drawings. In creating he tries to break the limitations of available materials in order to build spectacular new worlds.

## Microcosm – Miao Xiaochun Solo Exhibition

Where: Arario Beijing, Jiuchang Art Complex, Beihuqu Lu, AnwaiBeiYuan Jie, Chaoyang District

When: Until May 3, Daily except Sunday and Monday, 11 am – 6 pm  
Tel: 5202 3800



## 5 Friday, March 20

### Exhibition 3.1415926 ... Young Artists Group Exhibition

Where: Beijing Art Now Gallery, Building E, Red Yard, 1 Caochangdi, Cuigezhuang Village, Chaoyang District

When: Until May 10, 12–6 pm  
Admission: Free  
Tel: 5127 3292

### Erosion

Where: 17 Liaogezhi, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until April 5, 10 am – 11 pm  
Admission: Free  
Tel: 13691258749

### Movie Groupie

Where: Haoyun Bar, 1 Xingba

Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 8 pm  
Admission: 40 yuan

Tel: 8448 3335

### Scottish Cinema of Dreams in China

Where: China Film Archive, 3 Wenhui Lu, Haidian District

When: Until March 27; 3:30 pm, 6 pm and 7 pm  
Admission: Free, but book early

Tel: 5192 4225

### Nightlife Gar

Where: Yugong Yishan, 3 Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 9:30 pm  
Admission: 60 yuan  
Tel: 6404 2711

## 6 Saturday, March 21

### Exhibition Pause at Half- way – Shi Qing Solo Exhibition

Where: ShangHART Beijing, 261 Caochangdi, Chaoyang District

When: Until May 10, daily except Monday, 11 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6432 3202

### The Spring of Thoughts – The Mysterious Feminine World of Anna Rita Alatan Solo Exhibition



Where: The Art Museum of China, Central Academy of Fine Arts, 8 Huajiadi Nanjie, Chaoyang District

When: Until March 26, 9 am – 4:30 pm  
Admission: 15 yuan  
Tel: 6477 1123

### Xingzhe

Where: 9 Cube Gallery, E04-10, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until April 15, 9 am – 5 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8459 9210

### Nightlife

#### Milk@Coffee

Where: Piano performance stage, West Tower of SOHO Shangdu, 8 Dongdaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 1:30 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 13801108173

### Sally Can't Dance – Second China Avant-garde Music Festival

Where: D-22, 242 Chengfu Lu, Haidian District

When: 2:30 pm

Admission: 80 yuan

Tel: 6265 3177

## Sunday, March 22

### Exhibition Introversion and Meditation – Kang Haitao Solo Exhibition

The exhibition presents a selection of Kang's paintings made within the last 10 years.

Where: PIFO New Art Gallery, B-11, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until April 19, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5978 9562

### Measures of Entanglement – Mona Hatoum Solo Exhibition

The Palestinian British artist's first solo exhibition in East Asia features sculptures and installations made since 2006, as well as a selection of her videos and works on paper.

Where: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until April 5, daily except Monday, 10 am – 7 pm

Admission: 15 yuan; free on Thursdays

Tel: 8459 9269

### Merlin, Champagne & Regalia – Liu Gang Solo Exhibition

The artist's first solo exhibit presents selections from his new photographic series, Paper Dream (2008). Using images collected from newspaper advertisements for upscale housing developments in Beijing.

Where: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until April 4, Daily except Monday, 10 am – 7 pm  
Admission: 15 yuan; free on Thursdays

Tel: 8459 9269

### Movie



### Memories of Matsuko

Where: Sculpting in Time (beside the Tennis Stadium in Beihang University), 37 Xueyuan Lu, Haidian District

When: 1:45 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8231 0662

### Nightlife

#### 1626 & Fang Datong

Where: Fengchao Theater, 3/F Dongchuang Cinema, 3 Xinzhong Jie, Dongzhimen Wai Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 1:30 pm

Admission: Free, but book early

Tel: 6434 1626 ext. 0

## Upcoming

### Nightlife Touch Blue

Where: Jianghu, 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiadaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District  
When: March 25, 9 pm  
Admission: 30 yuan  
Tel: 6401 4611

## Stage in April

### Concert

#### China Philharmonic Orchestra 2008-2009 Music Festival

Who: Conducted by Paul Meyer  
Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Chaoyang District  
When: April 5, 7:30 pm  
Admission: 50-680 yuan  
Tel: 6501 1854

#### Xue Wei Violin Recital

Where: National Grand Theater Concert Hall (west side of the Great Hall of the People), Xicheng District  
When: April 17, 7:30 pm  
Admission: 80-500 yuan  
Tel: 6655 0000

#### Taking the Road Beijing Concert 2009

Who: Jonathan Lee, Wakin Chou, A Yue and Lo Tayu  
Where: Beijing Workers Gymnasium, Gongti Bei Lu, Chaoyang District  
When: April 18, 7:30 pm  
Admission: 280-1,680 yuan  
Tel: 6417 7845

#### Chanson Concert

Who: William Sheller  
Where: Zhongshan Music Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), Dongcheng District  
When: April 19, 7:30 pm  
Admission: 30-380 yuan  
Tel: 6559 8306

#### Bertrand Chamayou Piano Recital

Where: Beijing University Centennial Memorial Hall, 116 Zhongguancun Bei Dajie, Haidian District  
When: April 25, 7 pm  
Admission: 80-150 yuan  
Tel: 6275 8452

#### Mantovani Orchestra China Tour – Beijing Concert

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Chaoyang District  
When: April 28-29, 7:30 pm  
Admission: 180-1,280 yuan  
Tel: 6501 1854

### Dance

#### Juliette Binoche and

#### Akram Khan

Where: Mei Lanfang Grand Theater, 48 Hepingli Dajie, Xicheng District

When: April 3-5, 7:30 pm  
Admission: 180-1,280 yuan  
Tel: 5833 1218

#### Oliver Twist

Who: British TNT Theater  
Where: Beijing University Centennial Memorial Hall, 116 Zhongguancun Bei Dajie, Haidian District  
When: April 17-19, 7 pm  
Admission: 80-200 yuan  
Tel: 6275 8452

### Opera

#### Tosca

Who: Directed by Lang Kun  
Where: National Grand Theater Opera Hall (west side of the Great Hall of the People), Xicheng District  
When: April 15-18, 7:30 pm  
Admission: 100-880 yuan  
Tel: 6655 0000

(By Jackie Zhang)

By Venus Lee

The post-lunch afternoon nap has long been imagined to be a healthy practice, but new British studies claim an afternoon siesta is a super way to set oneself up for Type-2 diabetes.

In the study, nappers' risk of developing diabetes rose by 26 percent. However, Chinese experts say the siesta is being made a scapegoat for other unhealthy habits.

# Too many Zzzzs can cause diabetes?

## Snoozing your way sick

Research presented at a conference in Glasgow, UK, earlier this month found that two-thirds of the 16,000 older Chinese people surveyed napped at least once a week, and those who

napped even more often were a quarter more likely to develop Type-2 diabetes.

Lead researcher Dr Shahrad Taheri said waking from a nap releases hormones that can

cause an insulin crash, which accentuates one's risk of the dreaded disease.

Type-2 diabetes usually develops late in clinically obese people. It is a serious condition that

can cause long-term complications like heart disease, stroke, blindness, kidney failure and limb rot, requiring amputation.

The study was done by a group of scientists from the University of

Birmingham and by Guangzhou Hospital in China. "[The data] should make doctors more aware of the impact unhealthy and irregular sleeping patterns can have on general health," they said.

## Siesta not to blame

Li Weiguang, director of endocrinology at the Sino-Japanese Friendship Hospital, said it may be possible that people on the verge of developing diabetes are prone to fatigue. This would mean the people's pre-diabetic state, not napping, led to the disease.

"The siesta is just a scapegoat," he said.

He said it is too big of a leap to label napping as a risk factor for diabetes based on a survey alone. "There is no relevant science to explain the link between an afternoon nap and an increased risk of diabetes, which concerns fluctuations of sugar levels in the bloodstream," Ji Linong, director of the diabetes department at Peking University, said.

After eating, blood sugar levels rise and cause the body to secrete insulin, a hormone which reduces blood sugar levels. However, if for any reason the rise in blood sugar level is substantial, insulin secretion can follow suit, and this can lead to low blood sugar, Ji said. This can cause physical and mental energies to stall, and may induce extreme fatigue. It can also make the person hungry for sweet foods when they wake back up.

"The most common time this occurs is in the mid to late afternoon — about three hours after lunch. If an individual habitually has this imbalance, the likelihood is that they will be secreting relatively high levels of insulin. The body may become somewhat 'numb' to the effects of insulin. That can stress the pancreas, which is responsible for secreting the hormone, and can eventually lead to deficient insulin secretions," Ji said.

Researchers at the University of Birmingham admitted the link was not clear, since it's possible nappers were less physically active or prone to insomnia. Many people avoid sleeping during the day because they fear it will disrupt their sleep at night.

## Benefits of extra winks

The benefits of an afternoon nap were documented by Dr Sara Mednick, a Harvard University scientist and sleep expert, who said the regular nap could be a "life-saving habit."

A six-year Greek study published in 2007 showed mid-day naps could help prevent heart disease. People who slept for 30 minutes three times a week had a 37 percent lower chance of a heart attack, said Dr Dimitrios Trichopoulos, lead researcher at the Harvard School of Public Health.

It is thought that napping triggers the release of sleep hormones, which may reduce stress — a primary agent of heart disease, he said.

Nappers were also less prone to making mistakes on the job and demonstrated more brainpower, Zhan ShuQing, the neurologist at Capital University of Medical Sciences, said.

"The neurons involved in brain function need to rest and recuperate after a day's stress. A midday nap can improve the accuracy of intellectual performance. MRI scans of nappers have shown that brain activity stays high throughout the day after a nap, whereas it would normally decline," she said.

## Tips:

### 1. When to nap

Mednick said the ideal nap enters two stages of sleep: slow-wave sleep — a deeply relaxing type of sleep, when the brain is moving at a slower pace — and REM — when the brain is fairly alert and engaged in creative thought.

The prime time to get such a nap is between 1 pm and 3 pm, partly because the sun is at its highest and temperatures peak, making people feel naturally sleepy, and partly because it is the only time that people can enjoy slow-wave sleep and REM in equal proportions.

She said a nap that includes equal parts of slow-wave sleep and REM sleep is perfect. When people have only slow-wave sleep, their performance remains stable, but naps in both modes provide a guaranteed boost.

### 2. Where to nap

Location is a stumbling block for many nappers, unless they work out of the home.

"Ideally you should find somewhere quiet and dark. Turn off your phone and put your computer to sleep," Zhan said. "But most employees will have to make do the best they can. It is much simpler for those with their own office to take a nap on a couch after lunch. However, if there is no place to lie down, at least raise your feet. Our bodies associate certain postures with sleep, and approximating these can help to get in the right mode."

Other suggestions include sleeping in your car or on a park bench.

Investing in a pair of earplugs is worthwhile if there is lots of noise.

Avoid caffeine, and don't sleep somewhere too warm: the best temperature for sleep is 15 to 20 C.

### 3. How long to nap

Zhan said the "perfect nap" is 30-60 minutes. This can produce the same benefits as a seven-hour night of sleep.

But since it is unrealistic for most people to nap this way, it's best to bend the nap to fit one's lifestyle. "For the chronically tired, two shorter, 25-minute naps at lunch and after work may be enough to help make up the sleep debt. But don't nap too late in the day, because it may make it hard for you to fall asleep at your regular bedtime," she said.



CFP Photo

# High-flying heralds of spring

By Zhang Dongya

In Beijing, it is not the budding of new leaves that signal of spring's arrival, but the appearance of colorful kites. The city's elders do it as a way to welcome the season. For the rest of the population, kite-flying offers a good opportunity to enjoy the sunshine, the breeze and nature newly awakened. Below are the 10 best places in the city to go kite-flying, and tidbits to help newbies enjoy this popular pastime.



CFP Photos

## Chinese kite culture

A kite is called *fengzheng* in Chinese, "a musical instrument in the wind." According to an old tale, a man named Li Ye in the 10th century once attached a bamboo whistle to a kite. With the object flying high overhead, the whistle sounded like the *zheng*, a Chinese stringed instrument, hence its name.

China is known as the birthplace of

kites, and its development can be traced back to the Spring and Autumn Period, more than 2,000 years ago. Kites were invented not for pleasure but for military purposes. Warriors used them to send signals to troops in distant locations; they also served the role of present-day hang gliders to help people jumping down from a high place land safely.

Kites became popular among common people beginning in the Song Dynasty (960–1279), when they took on new sizes, shapes and designs. Nowadays, people see kite-flying as a great outdoor pastime, which also promotes good health.

As a folk art, Chinese kite designs vary from region to region, but the top

three manufacturers are considered to be Beijing, Tianjin and Weifang, Shandong Province. Weifang is regarded as "the cradle of Chinese kite production." Beijing, on the other hand, has been making kites for 300 years, notably the swallow-shaped ones, which inspired the creation of Nini, one of the Beijing Olympic mascots.



## Kite-flying havens in town

In recent years, it has become harder and harder to find open areas ideal for kite-flying. Good thing the trusty old places are still around: squares and parks with vast grounds that kite fliers adore. People who are looking for more space can head for reservoirs and mountains in the city's outskirts.

### 1. Tian'anmen Square

The political and historical symbol is also one of the most popular for kite-flying despite its perennially huge crowds. This is where elderly Beijingers come to show off their kites to family members, and where spectators flock to admire the newest designs. Fliers just need to be careful their lines don't get tangled with

the dozens of others around – and with the flagpole of course. Nobody wants the Tian'anmen guards after them.

Getting there: Take Subway Line 1 to the Tian'anmen West or Tian'anmen East station.

### 2. Beijing Exhibition Center Square

This open area attracts not only kite lovers, but also skateboarders and rollerskaters. Elaborate kites in the shape of dragons and other creatures are a common sight in the skies above the square, where enthusiasts fly them to dizzying heights.

Getting there: Take Bus 7, 26, 27, 31, 52, 72, 104, 105, 106 or 334 to Xizhimen

Wai stop.

### 3. Temple of Heaven

Between Qiniandian, the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvest, and Yuanqiutan, the Circular Mound Altar, is a wide white-stone terrace suitable for flying kites. Balusters more than two meters high effectively create a shield from the surrounding trees. Entrance to the park costs 15 yuan during the peak season (April–October) and 10 yuan the rest of the year.

Getting there: Take Bus 17, 36, 120, 729 or 803 to Tiantan stop, or Bus 34, 106, 110, 687, 707 or 743 to Tiantan Beimen stop.

### 4. Yuandadu Relics Park

Built along the relics of the Yuan

Dynasty city wall, this is the largest band-shaped park in the city. It runs a total of 9 kilometers and is divided into the Haidian and Chaoyang section. The part of the park that borders a river is flat and wide, fit for kite-flying.

Getting there: Take Subway Line 10 to Anzhenmen station, then walk a few minutes to reach the park.

### 5. Haidian Park

The park has a lawn the size of 24 Olympic-size swimming pools, where people come to fly kites and play badminton.

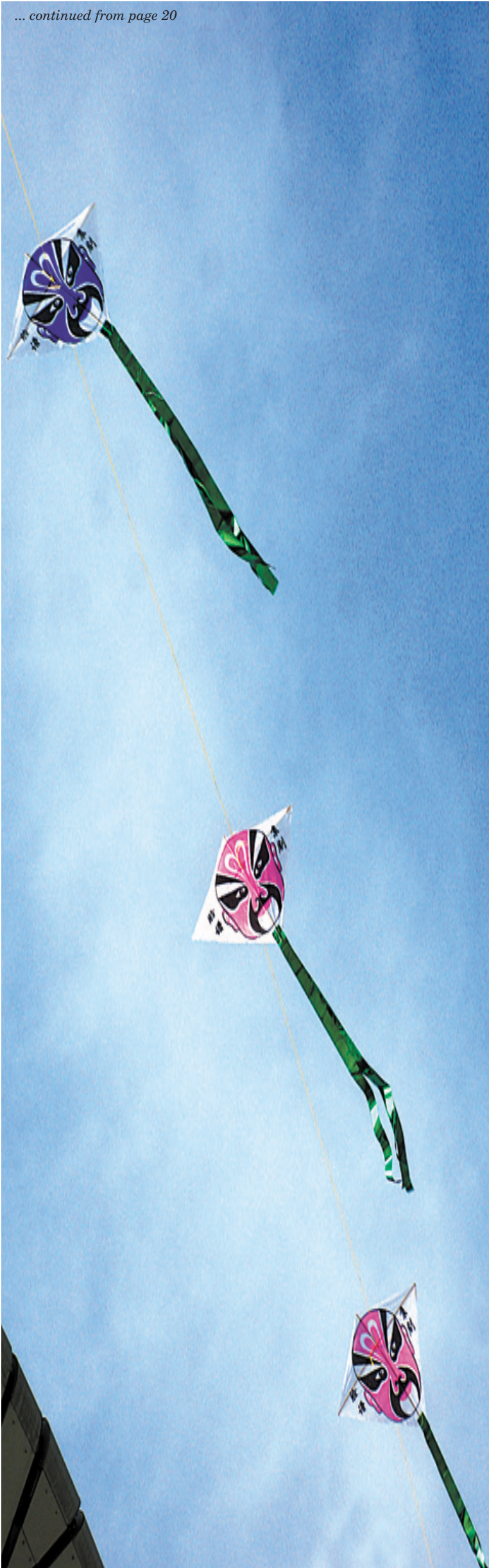
Getting there: Take Bus 384, 482, 534, 634 or 671 to Haidian Park stop.

*Continued on page 21...*



Tian'anmen Square is always the first choice for kite enthusiasts.

... continued from page 20



More foreigners are joining the kite-flying crowd.



Sunhe Kite Market offers all kinds of kites to suit people of any age.

**6. Shisanling Reservoir**

Located in Changping District, the reservoir is a good place to go fishing; it also has a wide vacant area ideal for kite-flying. Another good location is Mang Mountain, on the northeast side of the reservoir. The mountain, which is easy to climb, has moderate winds.

Getting there: Take Bus 643 to Shisanling Reservoir stop.

**7. Daxing Niantan Reservoir**

This reservoir dried up years ago and looks more like an overgrown patch of land. But this desolate area in Daxing District has attracted many kite lovers, particularly the more inventive fliers.

Getting there: Take Bus 957 to Daxing stop.

**8. Huangcaoliang Mountain**

Situated at the west end of Mentougou District, Huangcaoliang is actually a section of West Mountain. Covered with grass and flowers most of the year, it is a scenic location to fly a kite. From the mountain, visitors will also have a complete view of surrounding hills.

Getting there: Take Bus 929 to Zhaitang stop, then take a cab to Huangcaoliang.

**9. Yangtaishan Scenic Area**

The clearing at the top of Yangtai Mountain in Haidian District offers room for kite flying. The entrance fee is 8 yuan.

Getting there: Take Bus 346 to Bei'anhe Beikou stop.

**10. Qinglong Lake**

This is a large reservoir in Fangshan District, which doubles as a recreation center. Non-kite fliers can come to enjoy a range of water activities. Admission is 10 yuan.

Getting there: Take Bus 616, 646, 917, 952 and 971 to Liangxiang Ximen, then transfer to Bus 36.

**Where to buy kites**

Liaowuhen, located in Shichahai, sells traditional Chinese kites, including swallow-shaped kites and a Peking Opera mask series. Some have won awards at international kite competitions. Prices range from a hundred to thousands of yuan.

Where: 73 Yandai Xiejie, Xicheng District

Sanshizhai, or the Three-Stone Kites Company, specializes in hand-made paper kites shaped as butterflies, birds, dragonflies, fish, dragons and snakes. It also sells kites with a more contemporary design, like colorful triangles. Their products are cheaper than Liaowuhen's; prices range from 30 yuan to the hundreds.

Where: Jia 25 Di'anmen Xi Dajie, Xicheng District

Shoppers can also head for kite markets located on the city's outer edges. One of them is Sunhe Kite Market, which stocks a huge range of kites. Vendors can test-fly kites, show customers how they work and how to pack them away.

**Kite-flying Tips:**

1. It is best to fly a kite on a sunny day with strong breeze. Take a pair of sunglasses to protect your eyes from the sun's glare and harsh UV rays.
2. Choose a wide and flat area, and stay away from airports, electric poles and roads to avoid accidents.
3. It is best to have two people flying a kite: one to hold the reel and the other to fly the kite itself. For a big dragon kite, at least three people are needed to launch it: one to hold the reel and kite head, another to support the middle section, and the last the tail.
4. If a kite gets cut or blown off, quickly reel in the remaining length of string to prevent causing trouble to other fliers.



Temple of Heaven



Beijing Exhibition Center Square



By Mike Grigg

"The ability to inspire yourself in other people" is the most important part of leadership, Steven R. Covey says in *The 8th Habit*. Our ability to coach others and watch them succeed improves our personal development and creates a sense of teamwork and organization.

When I went to university, my motto was "by teaching we learn." In every class I took, I learned how to take new knowledge and apply it to business practices. For every business class I took, I had to find a volunteer job in a company. In that company, I had to apply my knowledge to its business practices. After success, it was time to teach others in the next class.

I learned how to build fast teams by encouraging members to transfer skills and teaching each other. Since volunteering with private, public and government organizations during university and now working in the US and China, I have repeatedly learned and taught new skills

# Coaching is an essential leadership trait for long-term performance



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wherever applicable.

Coaching in a three-step process can help to quickly build teams.

## Identification

First, one should identify whether a potential or existing teammate is "coachable." Determine his or her experience, ability and passions.

Determining how much experience someone possesses is essential in assessing how quickly he or she can learn. Once a person understands the basic logic of the skill or concept, they can set out on their own to learn from, add to or upgrade their knowledge. Someone who possesses education and real experience is usually easier to coach.

After that, determine their current and potential ability. Ability is the result of achieving consistent results over a period of time. This time period may vary with complexity. A strong ability in presentation skills, computer use or riding a bike can be recognized relatively quickly. Building a successful marketing plan, flying an airplane or inventing a new part for a machine would require strong performance evaluation over an extended time.



CFP Photo

Thirdly, the candidate's passion must be demonstrated over time. Passion is the excitement and willingness a person has dedicated to his or her field. Passion cannot be characterized with charisma – heart-felt enthusiasm and positivity. Many new graduates possess charisma, which is often momentary and short-lived. Genuine passion is demonstrated in a field through overcoming challenges and being persistent.

Once your coaching candidate possesses experience, ability and passion, you can move on to the next step: communication.

## Communicate

In an airport, air traffic controllers are an elite group of

people who dedicate their time and energy to guiding commercial airplanes from start to finish. They have many years of experience, proven ability and passion for guiding pilots. As a coach, you are the air traffic controller guiding your candidates on an outline of their development. Talk with them about their short and long-term goals and keep a record. You can push them into areas they would like to develop themselves in if you know their potential. Professional sports coaches dedicate their lives to communicating with their players, and as a professional leader you should too.

## Empower

Empowering others is the ability to transfer your own responsibilities and tasks to a candidate. Their ability to perform the task must meet or exceed your requirements for you to trust them. This stage must be communicated before you begin testing the candidate to establish mutual trust. Give them steadily increasing challenges and record their improvements.

To successfully coach a candidate, he or she must have experience, ability and passion. As you begin to coach others according to this model, you will find more free time to develop yourself, your department and organization.

# Let there be light: the NVC story

By Ashis Chakrabarti, Merry Wang

NVC Lighting Technology Corporation, a professional lighting company that handled research, manufacturing and sales of lighting products, plunged into darkness in 2005. The bitter dispute between Wu Changjiang and two other shareholders had used up its working capital and the company's survival was at stake.

What happened next was the story of one woman, the courage of her ideas, her professionalism and her belief in her ability to change things.

Monita grew up in Hong Kong and studied business at City University in New York. When she graduated in 1983, she joined the taxation division of the Arthur Andersen accounting firm and became its first senior female employee with a bilingual and bicultural background.

Her skills and experience brought her to the attention of senior management at Arthur Andersen and she took charge of its Greater China business. In 1987, she worked with Brilliance Auto to raise capital through an initial public offering on the New York Stock Exchange, the first by a mainland Chinese company.

During the next decade, Monita became one of the few "trusted" advisors to Taiwan and Mainland institutions in

dealing with sensitive US issues. It was a unique role as sides tried to establish a business foothold in the US. She also started to advise US institutions on China investments.

In the following years, venture capital began to flood into the Chinese market and an energetic Monita enjoyed work-

**Despite all of its problems Monita believed there was an opportunity to turn NVC into the leading player in its industry – one worthy of investment.**

ing in this new and dynamic environment. She became the CFO of 8848.net, the largest e-commerce company, and raised 342 million yuan worth of venture capital over six months. She brought the company to the brink of a NASDAQ public offering, but it was canceled due to weakening market conditions: this in spite of having a green flag from the regulatory commission.

Then came her involvement with NVC.

With the lighting company struggling with a lack of capital and shareholder problems, Monita entered the scene, almost by accident.

Wu Changjiang was at a loss as to how to ensure the company's survival. One of his friends, a journalist named Yao Xiaohong, approached Monita to find out if she could help Wu out of the mess.

As founder of Ascend Capital Partners, Monita had helped others in various ways. But she did not know Wu. However, once she got to know Wu and his company, she wasted no time in making her decision.

NVC had a huge capital deficit and lots of problems; but despite all of its problems, Monita believed there was an opportunity to turn NVC into the leading player in its industry – one worthy of investment. In February 2006, she and her friends lent NVC 20 million yuan and started to get involved in its revival. The loan carried a high risk as NVC could have gone bankrupt if Monita failed to turn it around.

After bankrolling NVC, Monita and her Ascend team helped Wu and his company step by step: they took part in management, operations, marketing and much else, far broader than simply financial consulting. The Ascend team invested another 72 million yuan in June bumping out the last two shareholders.

In August 2006, NVC obtained its first outside invest-



ment when SAIF Partners invested 150 million yuan.

Monita and her team found many problems working in NVC, but they worked to bring in talented people – including the CFO of a well-known Hong Kong listed company, former senior management from Philips and lighting experts – to turn it around. They also completed four acquisitions for light source, ballast and lighting fixtures.

Today, NVC generates 10-15 percent of its sales in European and American markets. While less than 10 years old, it has become China's top lighting manufacturer, surpassing state-owned peers like Yankon and Foshan Lighting. NVC's net profits climbed from 48 million yuan when Monita got involved to 308 million this year.

Its stunning turnaround attracted a 253-million-yuan investment from Goldman Sachs, a leading investment firm, on September 25, 2008. SAIF partners increased their existing investment by 68 million yuan.

The company's success has a message for other enterprises mired in the current gloom: Good choices, good decisions and a good attitude can make all the difference between darkness and light in both life and business.

## Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Wang Yu at wangyu2008@ynet.com.

# Textbooks are not enough

By Wang Yu

More than 20 years ago, in the 1980s, few Chinese people could speak English. Those who did were mostly professionals, thus many were eager to learn the language and be counted among the privileged. Even those who knew very little English tried to show off whenever they could.

In Tianjin, my home city, there is a foreign language university where my uncle studied English during that decade. Most of the school's English graduates were sent to government departments and state-run firms to help officials communicate with foreigners. My uncle was assigned to a company, which turned out to be near a friend's dental clinic.

The two planned to have lunch together one day, so my uncle walked over to his friend's clinic. When my uncle arrived, his friend had just finished attending to a foreign patient. It seemed like the man's tooth had just been extracted.

"OK, you can now shut up," the dentist told his patient with a smile.

"What the ..." the man muttered, looking both bewildered and in pain.

"It's finished, so you should shut up for an hour."

"But ... I didn't even say anything ..."

"It doesn't matter, just do as I say and you'll be fine," my uncle's friend said, the smile never leaving his face. The patient continued to look puzzled however.

"Ah, excuse me ..." my uncle began, trying to keep his face straight. He turned to the foreigner: "I think my friend used the wrong phrase. The doctor actually meant you should keep your mouth closed for an hour to allow the medicine to work. Afterwards you'll be fine."

"Yes, that's right!" the dentist beamed.

After my uncle told me the story, he said the dentist made the mistake since he didn't have enough practice with native English speakers. Learning a foreign language through textbooks is never enough and can sometimes even lead to hilarious misunderstandings.

My best friend Anna Lee cannot agree with me more. She shared an experience that also happened in Tianjin, in a foreign company where she used to work. She said she had a gay colleague named Taylor, whose parents were from Mexico and the US, and who was eager to learn Chinese.

Taylor was a fast learner: A year after arriving in the country, he could already carry on basic conversations in Chinese – and he was proud of it. One day, Anna and Taylor had a conversation about the director of their department, a man known for being stingy.

"I heard he has never offered to foot the bill when he goes out with our colleagues although those people have already bought him lunch several times," Taylor said.

"Yes, he never has. What an iron cock!" Anna said.

"A what?" Taylor's jaw almost fell.

"An iron cock," Anna repeated.

"What exactly do you mean by that?" Taylor said with a grin.

"I mean that he's quite an uncaring guy. We would use the word *tie gongji* to describe him. 'Tie' is iron and 'gongji' is cock or an adult male chicken," she explained.

"I see. Chinese people call stingy people 'iron roosters.' But I do have to tell you that 'cock' is also a vulgar term for the male reproductive organ," Taylor said.

"If you use 'iron cock' to describe our boss, some people might get other ideas about you and him," he teased. "So for your own good, I suggest you use 'rooster' in the future."

"I hate English textbooks!" Anna said after finishing her story.



CFP Photo

## Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to wangyu2008@ynet.com together with your name and address.

# Soup Opera

By Tiffany Tan

It doesn't take a lot of imagination to guess that this one was meant to be "Soap Opera." But "Soup Opera" is definitely amusing. It brings to mind a scene from Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, in which the household furniture, gadgets, china, cleaning equipment and kitchen utensils do a song-and-dance number as

they prepare Belle's dinner. That's "soup opera" for you – soup served over an operatic performance.

The Chinese words on the sign, *lianxiju*, actually mean "TV series," which of course is synonymous with soap operas. This is a good word to remember when you visit DVD shops, or when you chat with sidewalk vendors.



## Blacklist

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week.

## Local professor: Zhu Shida

### 1. Respect the nature

I recently came across a Chinese fashion magazine. Upon perusing it, I found that it tried to be trendy by sprinkling its Chinese articles with showy English phrases. But some of its English was wrong. "Respect the nature" is an example. When we are talking about the world, everything except those things made by man, and the sum total of the forces at work throughout the universe, is "nature." You do not say "the nature." For instance, we say, "the laws of nature." So the magazine should have said "Respect nature."

### 2. They can transition from music charities to part of the business.

The main verb of the sentence is wrong. "Transition" is a noun. It can never be used as a verb, according to the *World Book Dictionary*. It means "a change or passing from one condition, place, thing, activity, or topic to another." You might say for example, "Lincoln's life was a transition from poverty to power." When you wish to express the act of carrying or the state of being carried through, you will have to use the verb "to transit." So this sentence should be rewritten as, "They can transit from music charities to part of the business."

## Native speaker: Penny Turner

### 1. Respect the nature

I agree that "the" should be dropped from the phrase. I don't know the Chinese language enough to guess why "the" unexpectedly appears in some English translations. Purdue University's Online Writing lab has a page on the use and non-use of articles. Readers may want to check out owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/esl/eslart.

### 2. They can transition from music charities to part of the business.

In response to the World Book Dictionary, Merriam-Webster Dictionary identifies "transition" as both a noun and an intransitive verb. In a piece in the *New York Times* last month, columnist David Brooks said that John McCain "has to transition from being an underdog to being a front-runner. He has to transition from being an insurgent to being the leader of a broad center-right coalition. He has to transition from being a primary season scrambler to offering a broader vision of how to unify the country." The sentence in contention can keep "transition" as its main verb, but it would be better rewritten as, "They can transition from being music charities to being part of the business."

# Vicky Cristina Barcelona (2008)

## Movie of the week

Do you know exactly what you do and do not want in life? Even if your answer is “yes,” Woody Allen would say there is always a time when you won’t. In this movie, time is as short as the two American girls’ summer holiday in romantic Barcelona. When they are back in the US, Vicky returns to her planned life, and Cristina remains puzzled about love. Though the movie’s tagline is “Life is the ultimate work of art,” for the masses it is simple and real.

## Synopsis

Two girlfriends Vicky and Cristina visit Barcelona for the summer, where they are both seduced by a free-thinking painter, Antonio. Vicky, practical and traditional in her approach to love and commitment, at first refuses him, but later succumbs to his charms. Cristina, on the other hand, accepts the painter’s love and they grow closer and shack up. When Antonio’s ex-wife breaks in, the three develop a cooperative and balanced relationship. Afterwards, Cristina realizes she can’t live in a threesome for the rest of her life and leaves the two. Vicky realizes she is unsatisfied in her married life and still attracted to Antonio ...

## Scene 1: At Judy’s apartment

**Judy (J):** We have a beautiful home.

**Mark (M):** We’ve really come to love it.

**J:** He makes friends with anybody and speaks the language, so he was like, “Wheel!”

**M:** You learned just fine. What do you do, Cristina?

**Cristina (C):** I am currently **at liberty (1)**.

**Vicky (V):** Come on. She made a film.

**J:** How exciting.

**C:** It was 12 minutes.

**M:** What was it about?

**C:** About? It was about why love is so hard to define.

**M:** That’s a mighty big subject to handle in 12 minutes.

**J:** Vicky, you’re getting your master’s in ...

**V:** Yeah, my master’s in Catalan Identity.

**M:** What do you plan on doing with that?

**V:** I don’t know. Maybe teaching, maybe curating.

**J:** You don’t have to do something. She’s marrying this wonderful man in the fall and all her conflicts will be resolved ... when he makes her pregnant.

**M:** Now that Judy’s decided your future ...

**J:** To your summer in Barcelona! Welcome.

**M:** Salud.



## Scene 2: On Mark’s boat

**Charles:** My dream is to accumulate enough wealth, sail off to an island and spend my days snorkeling. I’m actually a snorkeling **nut (2)**. Have you ever snorkeled before?

**Narrator:** Unfortunately, Charles and Cristina were not **a match made in heaven (3)**. Vicky, meanwhile, researched every aspect of Catalan life ... even getting a tour of the market and a local restaurant, to **delve into (4)** Catalan cooking. On balmy



summer nights, the girls would sometimes go hear Spanish guitar music ... which never failed to move Vicky in some magical way.

## Scene 3: At a little restaurant

**Antonio (A):** I would like to invite you both to come with me to Oviedo.

**V:** To come where?

**A:** To Oviedo. For the weekend. We leave in one hour.

**C:** Where is Oviedo?

**A:** A very short flight.

**V:** By plane?

**C:** What’s in Oviedo?

**A:** Sculpture that is very inspiring to me. A very beautiful sculpture. You’ll love it.

**V:** You’re asking us to fly to Oviedo and back?

**A:** No, we’ll spend the weekend. I’ll show you around the city. We’ll eat well, we’ll drink good wine, we’ll make love.

**V:** Who exactly is going to make love?

**A:** Hopefully, the three of us.

**V:** Oh, my God.

**A:** I’ll get your bill.

**V:** This guy doesn’t **beat around the bush (5)**. Look, **señor (6)**, maybe in a different life.

**A:** Why not? Life is short. Life is dull. Life is full of pain. This is a chance for something special.

**V:** Right. Who exactly are you?

**A:** I am Juan Antonio. And you are ... Vicky, and you are Cristina. Right? Or is it the other way around?

**V:** It could be the other way around ... because either of us will do to keep the bed warm. I get it.

**A:** Well, you are both so lovely and beautiful.

**V:** Well, thank you, but we do not fly off to make love ... with whoever invites us to charming little Spanish towns.

**A:** Does she always analyze every inspiration ... until each grain of charm is ... squeezed out of it?

**C:** I guess I have to say that ... my eyes

are green, actually.

**V:** I wouldn’t call our reluctance ... to **leap at (7)** your sexual offer being over-analytical. If you would care to join us for some ... recognized form of social interaction like a drink, we’d be fine ... but otherwise, I think you should try offering to some other table.

**A:** What offended you about the offer? Surely not that I find you both beautiful and desirable.

**V:** Offended me? No. It’s very amusing ... **Galling (8)**, to be honest, but ... Is it my imagination or is it getting a little late?

**A:** Let’s not negotiate like a contract. I came over here with no **subterfuge (9)**, and presented my best offer. I hope you will discuss it and give me the pleasure to take you with me to Oviedo. I have the good fortune to borrow my friend’s plane. It’s just big enough for the three of us and I’m a very good pilot.

**V:** It sounds very safe.

**A:** Think it over.

**V:** I hope you’re joking about going.

**C:** Oh, my God, This guy is so interesting.

**V:** Interesting!? Are you kidding?

What’s so interesting? He wants to get us both into bed. But he’ll settle for either. In this case, you.

**C:** Vicky, I’m a big girl, okay? If I want to sleep with him, I will. If not, I won’t.

**V:** Cristina, he’s a total stranger. This is impulsive, even for you ... and if I heard right, he was violent with his wife.

**C:** At least he’s not one of those factory-made **zombies (10)**, you know? This is a great way to get to know him.

**V:** No, it’s not. I’m not going to Oviedo ... with this charmingly candid wife beater. You find his aggressiveness attractive, but I don’t. And he’s certainly not handsome.

**C:** I think he’s very handsome. He has a great look. I mean, he’s really sexy.

**V:** Well, you would, because you’re a neurotic.

**C:** You have to admire his no-bullshit approach.

**V:** What are you talking about? It’s all bullshit. I’m not going to Oviedo. First off, I never heard of Oviedo. I don’t find him winning. Third, even if I wasn’t engaged ... and was free to **have some kind of dalliance with (11)** a Spaniard, I wouldn’t pick this one.

**C:** If we go back to the house now, we can just throw some things in a bag and we’ll meet him there. I took an instant liking to this guy. He’s not one of these **cookie-cutter molds (12)**. He’s creative and artistic.

**V:** Cookie-cutter mold? Is that what you think of Doug?

**C:** Doug? Who said anything about Doug?

**V:** It’s ridiculous. You like the way it sounds to pick up and fly off in an airplane.

## Vocabulary

**1. be at liberty:** be free, have nothing to do

**2. a nut:** an enthusiast or super fan

**3. a match made in heaven:** a pair by fate

**4. delve into:** to probe into, to explore

**5. beat around the bush:** to deliberately avoid getting to the point of a conversation

**6. señor:** a Spanish title for a man, similar to “mister” or “Sir”

**7. leap at:** to eagerly accept

**8. galling:** annoying

**9. subterfuge:** excuse, something intended to misrepresent the truth

**10. zombie:** someone who acts or responds in a mechanical or apathetic way

**11. have some kind of dalliance with:** flirt with, exhibit playful behavior to arouse sexual interest

**12. cookie-cutter molds:** a utensil used to cut cookie dough into desired shapes before baking, here it likens the man to being common or mass-produced

(By Zhang Dongya)